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ABSTRACT

Selected contributions from a workshop on competency-based adult education (CBAE) are presented in this monograph. The articles define the current trends in the theory and practice of CBAE. The monograph consists of five major sections. Section 1, the overview, offers a historical frame of reference, examination of terminology and definitions, a discussion of the nature of practitioner involvement/concerns, and current issues in CBAE. The second section, on programmatic perspectives, features articles discussing current philosophy and development of CBAE programs in basic education, pre-GED (general educational development) and GED preparation, English as a second language, vocational education, and three models of competency-based high school diploma programs. Other sections of the monograph discuss a model for CBAE staff development, administrative issues in CBAE, an examination of the current status and issues surrounding research and assessment in competency-based education and perspectives regarding the present and future role of CBAE in adult literacy education. (Author/CSS)

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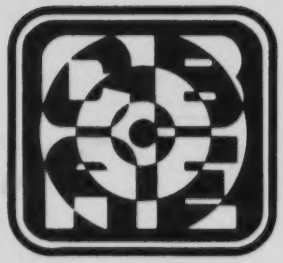

Proceedings of a National Invitational Workshop on

COMPETENCY-BASED ADULT EDUCATION

edited by Carol E. Kasworm • Buddy R. Lyle

The Workshop was held on June 20-22, 1978, in Austin, Texas

Co-sponsored by:
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I. OVERVIEW

A NATIONAL FOCUS ON COMPETENCY-BASED ADULT EDUCATION

by Dr. James R. Dorland, Executive Director

National Association for Public Continuing
and Adult Education

Introduction

Fellow adult educators, I come before you today not as an expert on competency-based adult education, but as an interested observer of the American adult education scene by virtue of having spent the past sixteen years of my life in adult education, thirteen of them while working out of Washington, D.C. The organization by which I am employed, the National Association for Public Continuing and Adult Education (NAPCAE), is proud to sponsor this workshop, which is being co-hosted by the University of Texas and by the Texas Education Agency. NAPCAE has a mandate in its Constitution "to give leadership to the development and implementation of public continuing and adult education." We view our sponsorship of this workshop and the future directions in which it will point us as a logical extension of our leadership mandate. Therefore, it is as NAPCAE's executive director and as a sometime chronicler of adult education development, that I share with you today some of my observations on the topic, "A National Focus on Competency-Based Adult Education."

However, I don't feel it is sufficient to deal with such a multi-faceted topic as competency-based adult education without dividing the broad area into several sub-topics. It is my intention to focus on three main areas: terminology, the historical perspective of competency-based adult education, and issues which seem to be arising.

First, A Focus on Terminology

Occasionally I hear someone say it's not especially important what you call something, but it's absolutely crucial what you do about that "something." I used to agree with that point of view much more than I do now. However, I'm at the place in my own thinking where I feel that labels are terribly important. People are wont to identify with labels, to group themselves and to organize around those labels, and to use them as shortcuts for a variety of activities associated with those labels. Governmental units tend to set educational policy and to fund programs by categories which have specialized names. This is not to argue that this approach is either philosophically or practically ideal, but it's important to realize that a great deal of emphasis is placed on what things are called and on how they are defined and perceived in the eye of the beholder.

In recent years we have become accustomed to the periodic emergence of new terms which capture our imagination and are quickly absorbed into our every day vocabulary. For example, we have adopted such educational terms as "team teaching," "core curriculum," "programmed learning," "modular instruction," "schools without walls," "external diplomas," "mainstreaming," "career education," "right to read," "lifelong learning," "back-to-basics," and those which we will concentrate upon here: "adult performance level," "minimum competency testing," "competency-based education," and most important of all for our purposes, "competency-based adult education."

Those of you who have come here to participate in this workshop are already at a level of experience and knowledge which precludes the necessity of starting from ground zero in discussing any of these key terms. Furthermore, we could spend an inordinate amount of time and discussion without ever coming to a complete agreement on specific definitions. However, in order to establish some

level of common understanding--at least for our purposes here--let me suggest that we consider these interpretations of the four key terms:

adult performance level (APL) -- refers to the specific research which was conducted by the University of Texas at Austin to "specify the competencies which are functional to economic and educational success in today's society and to develop devices for assessing these competencies."

minimum competency testing (MCT) -- means setting and measuring the attainment of specific standards for advancing in or graduating from schools, primarily for graduation from secondary school.

competency-based education (CBE) -- implies more than testing and assessment by referring to a total system of educational processes which are built upon providing opportunities for students to become successful in carrying out their life role activities rather than accumulating and demonstrating the possession of knowledge.

competency-based adult education (CBAE) -- refers to a set of activities similar to competency-based education with the exception that CBAE is exclusively for adults in their own special educational setting. In effect, CBAE is an extension, enlargement and/or modification of the kinds of adult learning activities which were set in motion by the APL research and curriculum.

Next, An Historical Perspective for CBAE

For our purposes it is not necessary to look back further than the early 1960's when federal legislation was passed which had lasting implications for the education of adults. The Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962 (P.L.87-415) marked the legislative birth of the term "adult basic education." When the Vocational Education Act of 1963 (P.L.88-210) was passed in December,

1963, it wasn't considered to be an adult education bill. However, its statement of purpose made it clear that adults could also be included within its purview by saying:

> ...persons of all ages in all communities of the State--those in high school, those who have already entered the labor market but need to upgrade their skills or learn new ones, and those with special education handicaps--will have ready access to vocational training or retraining...which is realistic in the light of actual or anticipated opportunities for gainful employment.

When the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (P.L 88-452) was enacted into law, its now legendary Title II B was called Adult Basic Education Programs. The Declaration of Purposes stated that --

> It is the purpose of this part to initiate programs of instruction for individuals who have attained age eighteen and whose inability to read and write in the English language constitutes a substantial impairment of their ability to get or retain employment commensurate with their real ability, so as to help eliminate such inability and raise the level of education of such individuals with a view to making them less likely to become dependent on others, improving their ability to benefit from productive and profitable employment, and making them better able to meet their adult responsibilities.[1]

With the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964, and the enactment of the Higher Education Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in the following year, 1965, the federal government had entered the education funding arena on a large scale basis. By the time the Adult Education Act was passed in 1966, transferring adult basic education from the Office of Economic Opportunity to the United States Office of Education, it was apparent that a policy decision had been made that there does exist a national responsibility to provide special help for America's undereducated adults. In fact, the Adult Education Act has been amended and extended a number of times since its original enactment in 1966, and as we meet here today both the House and the Senate have recently agreed with the central position that the federal government will continue to help subsidize the education of adults through the high school level for at least the next five years.

During the period from 1964 until the present, one of the philosophical underpinnings of the federal government's financial involvement in adult education has been that federally-financed adult education efforts ought to be functional to the extent adults should become more employable, less dependent on others, and better able to meet their adult responsibilities. But, one might reasonably ask, "What adult responsibilities?" An attempt to answer this question led to the APL research and to the present flowering of the CBAE movement.

From the early days of the Adult Education Act there were funds set aside for research and demonstration and for teacher training. Until the last several years the responsibility for allocating that money was reserved to the U.S. Commissioner of Education. Under that authority in August of 1970, Paul Delker, director of USOE's adult education programs then and now, issued a request for proposals for research projects leading to the establishment of a systematic definition of adult functional literacy. The first page of that RFP stated that "the challenge is to foster through every means the ability to read, write, and compute with the functional competence needed for meeting the requirements of adult living." In order that state and local program realities would be reflected in the proposals which were submitted, a stipulation was included that only a State Department of Education would be funded under the grant.[2]

The rest of the story is a chapter in adult education history which is undoubtedly well known to most of you. The Texas Education Agency, in conjunction with the University of Texas here in Austin, received the USOE grant to conduct a program of research to define Adult Performance Levels. Our own Bob Allen, state director of adult education here, had the key administrative responsibility for the leadership efforts of the Texas Education Agency, and Norvel Northcut

headed a talented team of young professionals who conducted the history-making program of research from 1971-75 which resulted in a four-part definition, a set of objectives, and the Adult Performance Level Survey.

In October of 1975 Terrell Bell, who was then serving as U.S. Commissioner of Education, held a widely-publicized press conference in which he announced the results of the APL research efforts and succeeded in directing national media attention to the fact that a shockingly high number of adult Americans do not possess an educational background which enables them to perform a satisfactory number of basic skills to cope successfully with every day living.

Following the completion of the APL Study, in March of 1976 the American College Testing Program entered into an agreement with the University of Texas at Austin and with USOE under which ACT was granted the exclusive right to conduct further research, and to refine, adapt, publish and distribute APL materials resulting from the four years of APL research. This was done to help facilitate adult competency assessment at both state and local levels. Seven instruments are now available from ACT: a survey form dealing with adult competencies, another for use with high school students, and five diagnostic instruments covering each of the APL knowledge areas. Tom Mann, a longtime adult educator who had previously served with distinction as a local director, a state director and a university professor of adult education, joined the American College Testing Program's staff to give leadership to their APL efforts. With the U.S. Office of Education, Paul Delker designated Jim Parker from the Division of Adult Education staff to concentrate on APL and CBAE-related activities. Mr. Parker also chairs NAPCAE's active Committee on Competency-Based Education.

Since the completion of the APL study the amount of interest which has been shown in competency-based adult education has been little short of

phenomenal. The National Council of State Directors of Adult Education, a NAPCAE affiliate chaired by Cliff Norris, state director of adult education in Oregon and one of the leading proponents of CBAE, has shown a steadily-growing interest in encouraging its members to fund special programs for the development of competency-based adult education. A USOE Division of Adult Education draft of a Profile of the States indicates that as of last month 43 states were carrying out some 153 separate CBAE programs during the current fiscal year with a total investment of approximately $8 million![3] A national invitational conference on CBAE was convened in San Francisco a year ago, and in February of this year in New Orleans USOE sponsored a national conference of state directors of adult education and other state and local personnel to promote new programs and to discuss critical issues in relation to the APL study findings. This national workshop, then, is a logical extension of those earlier activities and is designed to continue the discussion and critical examination of the issues which have surfaced as a result of the CBAE movement.

CBAE-Related Issues

Let us consider some of the issues. I'm sure your list will differ from mine; but, above all, I think it's important for us to keep in mind that CBAE is currently in an early developmental stage; that it is a viable, dynamic movement; and that it is a process which is ongoing and not static. Issue #1: There is currently much confusion over the terminology surrounding the competency-based adult education movement, and this confusion tends to obscure a critical examination of the pro's and con's of the movement itself.

While we go through the process of educational change in this country, there is inevitably a "shake down" period until things seem to fall into place.

In the CBAE movement we find ourselves quite early in that change process, and terms are used loosely and interchangeably. We hear and read about functional literacy, educational accountability, back to basics, competency testing, minimum competency testing, competency-based education, competency-based teacher education, competency-based adult education, adult performance level, general education development, and on and on. So much confusion exists over the terms themselves, that it is often difficult to get around to an examination of other more substantive issues. However, this state of affairs is not so unusual. In fact, many of us here today aren't quite sure whether to call our line of work adult education, continuing education, adult continuing education, adult and continuing education, lifelong learning, lifetime learning, recurrent education, none of the above, or all of the above.

I didn't mention this issue first because I feel it is the most important but merely to make the point that this confusion over terminology does exist, that we should recognize it. If it continues indefinitely, it could become a substantial barrier to progress within the CBAE movement. Issue #2: <u>There are some very real philosophical differences about the purpose and nature of American education, and the CBAE movement has highlighted many of these differences</u>.

The following excerpt from the <u>Journal of Proceedings and Addresses</u> of an annual meeting of the National Education Association illustrates some of these major differences:

> It is the duty of the state to provide for the education of every child within its borders, and to see that all children obtain the rudiments of an education. The constitutional provision that all persons must contribute to the support of the public schools logically carried with it the implied provision that no persons should be permitted to defeat the purposes of the public-school law by forcing their children at an early age to become bread-winners.

> The association regrets that revival in some quarters of the idea that the common school is a place for teaching nothing but reading, spelling, writing and ciphering; and takes this occasion to declare that the ultimate object of education is to teach the children how to live righteously, healthily, and happily, and that to accomplish this object it is essential that every school inculcate the love of truth, justice, purity, and beauty through the study of biography, history, ethics, natural history, music, drawing, and manual arts.[4] (Underscoring added for emphasis)

The annual meeting where this pronouncement was made was held in Asbury Park and Ocean Grove, New Jersey, July 3-7, 1905! And the debate goes on. We continue to have articulate proponents for the ultimate value of a liberal education, and we continue to hear from those who argue the benefits of a "practical" vocationally-oriented education in which a person learns how to do something "useful." Within the area of adult basic education we hear from those who feel that literacy training per se is the ideal preparation for personal fulfillment and/or employment while we also hear loud and clear the message of people from the CBAE movement who cite the APL Study as proof that the most effective approach is to prepare people to master certain specific proficiencies and competencies.

Since the publication of the results of the APL Study and the attendant publicity surrounding it and the entire CBAE movement, there have quite naturally been skeptics and critics. Much of the most vocal criticism has come from the university-based adult educators. Concerns and reservations about the APL program have been cogently raised by William Griffith, a professor of adult education at the University of British Columbia who taught at the University of Chicago for many years.[5] Dr. Griffith's responsible questioning has succeeded in awakening renewed interest in the CBAE movement and in causing other people to raise the kinds of questions which are essential to any systematic examination of what is being hailed in some quarters as a revolutionary approach to education. In my opinion, this is a healthy situation and we should

encourage more questioning of this nature. To prove its ultimate worth, CBAE must be able to withstand skepticism and criticism from many quarters.

Issue #3: There is some danger of "over kill" because we are being surfeited with words and reports about competency-based activities.

Suddenly it seems that almost everywhere we look we read and hear about "competency" education. The May 1978 issue of the highly-respected Phi Delta Kappan was devoted to the topic "Minimum Competency Testing." Special issue guest editor Chris Pipho made a comprehensive report on the status of minimum competency testing in 1978 and said that "As of March 15, 1978, 33 states had taken some type of action to mandate the setting of minimum competency standards for elementary and secondary students. All the remaining states either have legislation pending or legislative or state board studies under way."[6]

In their 1978 Policy Statements, a powerful education group, the Council of Chief State School Officers, included in the section on Leadership in Education--Instruction, the following statements:

> Competencies mastered by students are as important as the accumulation of credits, diplomas or degrees. While these traditional measures of achievement represent one indicator of competence, they should not be considered conclusive or all inclusive. The identification and definition of appropriate competencies and the methodologies leading to them are difficult.
>
> The Council urges state education agencies to accelerate the process toward (1) defining relevant competencies, (2) improving methods to attain and measure competencies, and (3) granting appropriate educational equivalency credits.[7]

William Spady, from the National Institute of Education and the District of Columbia Public Schools, has made some provocative comments about Competency-Based Education. At the beginning of a recent paper on "The Concept and Implications of Competency-Based Education," he wrote:

> Competency Based Education (CBE) ranks as one of the most misused and misapplied concepts in American education today. During the past five years a major ground swell of policy action has emerged in over thirty states imposing some kind of 'competency demonstration' as a condition for student promotion or graduation. In all but a few cases, what has come to be called CBE is no more than a testing and remediation program focused on basic literacy and mathematical skills. It misses the point in terms of the meaning and importance of Competency in life role activities, what it means to Base a program on competencies, and in what respects the term Education extends beyond the boundaries of student certification alone. In short, Competency Based Education, if adequately understood and flexibly applied, could be an exciting and valuable concept, but in order to be so educators, policy makers, and the public will have to be willing to entertain some substantial departures from traditional educational assumptions and practices.

At the conclusion of the paper, Spady had this to say:

> In a phrase, CBE means a continuous approach to instruction and certification for all students; and, as a California school administrator recently remarked, 'It makes perfect sense from an educational standpoint, but we'll all be afraid to try it. Instead, we'll keep giving kids standardized tests and ask teachers to grade tougher all twelve years.' CBE does, indeed, ask both educators and the public to give up decades of habits and assumptions regarding the structures and methods of schooling, just at the time when accountability looks cheaper and safer than another version of school reform. The 'CBE testing movement' has reached bandwagon proportions in just a few years, but CBE in practice may become this century's major non-event in public education.[8]

Periodically we read about state-by-state developments in such newsletters as Education Daily and Education U.S.A., and the U.S. Office of Education continues to produce helpful information for those interested in the CBAE movement. Many of you have been privileged to see two excellent drafts of USOE-sponsored papers: "Selected Issues in Competency-Based Adult Education: A Delphi Study," by Paul Taylor of the City College of New York,[9] and a "Summary of a Review of Competency Based Adult Education," by Joan Fischer from the Institute of Community Services at Worcester State College in Massachusetts.[10] These two works by Doctors Taylor and Fischer show promise of becoming landmark research efforts in the CBAE movement. I recommend them to you.

The work and the questioning go on, fortunately, for all of us. We are now at the point in the evolution of the CBAE movement in which we need to become increasingly selective while trying to choose the drummer to whose beat we are going to march. Issue #4: <u>There is a danger of educational faddism, adopting something because it's new and appears to be "in."</u>

I won't try to elaborate on this issue other than to mention it and to satisfy my conscience by merely having issued a warning. The bandwagon syndrome is alive and well in the U.S.A., and we educators are not immune from it. The very fact that you have elected to spend these next three days here in Texas looking closely and analytically at the phenomenon called "competency-based adult education" is evidence that you are not accepting anything because of its fad value.

Finally, on behalf of NAPCAE, I thank you most sincerely for being here this week. May the next three days prove to be as satisfying and fulfilling for you as you can possibly imagine them to be.

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PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF COMPETENCY-BASED ADULT EDUCATION

by Buddy Lyle, Louisiana Tech University
Louisiana

The competency-based movement in adult education is a dynamic and growing issue. The growth and expansion of projects and programs that deal with competency-based education has been enormous. To get exact statistics that reflect this growth is almost impossible. In May of 1978, it was reported that 43 states had funded 159 programs for a total of $8,003,000 that dealt, to some extent, with competency based-functional literacy. The projects addressed staff development, dissemination, curriculum development, individualized instruction, group instruction, needs assessment, diagnosis, evaluation, and other subjects pertinent to implementation of competency-based adult education.[1]

Progress has been evident over the past few years. Results of additional research efforts have been most useful in adding to the body of knowledge needed to implement competency-based education. Curriculum materials have been and are being developed by a number of projects across the country, and commercial materials are beginning to be made available to adult education programs. Even so, there is still much to be done.

Research

Research pertaining to competency-based adult education continues to grow, both in quantity and quality. Many of the leading pieces of research will be presented as a part of this publication. The questions addressed by the research range from determining appropriateness of instructional materials, to questioning the competency-based concept itself.

In Louisiana alone projects have been initiated to explore incorporating literacy skills through a career education format; to compare APL methods and materials with traditional ABE approaches; to field test a high school completion program that would combine both traditional and competency-based requirements; to field test APL modules with rural farmworkers; to train literacy tutors; to provide staff development programs in the area of competency-based instruction; and to develop or acquire a competency-based assessment instrument. These are mentioned just as examples of things that are happening in the area. Other states are busy providing research in these and other areas.

Curriculum

In FY '78 there were thirty projects identified by Clearinghouse ADELL, as being curriculum development projects that specifically addressed APL, competency-based adult education, and/or survival/coping skills. Materials tested or developed by these projects involved a broad audience. Included were materials for rural residents, ESL students, physically handicapped, farmworkers, ABE students, high school equivalency students, vocational, prison residents, low-income women, mentally retarded and Chinese. In addition to these materials, there are more and more materials being made available through commercial sources. Many of these materials are excellent; however, care should be taken in selecting materials, both non-commercially and commercially produced.

Most CBAE programs seem to depend heavily upon the "community" as a major supplier of instructional materials. Magazines, newspapers, banks, government agencies, social organizations, etc., are all providing invaluable instructional materials and resource people.

Assessment

The primary concerns when teaching in a CBAE approach are 1) to determine what the learner's needs are; 2) to provide appropriate activities and materials to meet those needs; and 3) to be able to measure the progress toward meeting the identified needs. To accomplish numbers one and three, assessment, in one form or another, must occur.

ADELL identifies six projects that specifically involve assessment. The activities are generally to provide training in diagnostic and evaluative procedures, but there are some projects that are involved in developing their own assessment instruments.[2]

One problem in this area is the development or identification of an instrument that is not too time consuming and yet will provide an adequate measure of both skills and content. There are several methods of gaining information about the learner. This may be done with formal, commercially produced instruments, or by more informal means such as by interview or teacher made tests and inventories. The best way is, probably, to use a combination of the two methods. The important thing to remember is that it is the teacher's responsibility to offer the best instruction possible in the shortest period of time to meet the individual learner's needs.

Staff Development

There seems to be a general agreement among adult educators, that additional staff development will be needed for successful implementation of competency-based programs. This training should be provided for administrators as well as teachers. It was demonstrated in Texas CBAE efforts that the most successful CBAE pilot sites were those where the administration understood

the concept, and was willing to make some changes and provide necessary resources to implement the program.

Not much has been done to identify the additional teacher competencies needed. Mocker and Spear made an initial effort in 1967 to "help the field think about what skills are needed by ABE teachers who are using the APL approach." The following competencies were added to Mocker's 1974 list of ABE teacher competencies:

1. Understand the background, purpose and potential of the APL concept.
2. Provide opportunities for personal growth and development toward the attainment of a positive self-image.
3. Provide career counseling and training in occupational knowledge skills.
4. Understand the relevance of APL and its effect on the entire process of education.
5. Apply the concept of relevant education in the planning process.
6. Understand the importance of problem-solving techniques in the planning process.
7. Understand the importance of interpersonal relations in the planning process.
8. Understand the importance of learner needs and wants in the planning process.
9. Select curriculum based on expressed interest and needs of the learner.
10. Incorporate knowledge of community resources in the curriculum.
11. Incorporate occupational knowledge into the curriculum.
12. Select curriculum that will aid the learner in developing an awareness of legal rights.

13. Select curriculum that will provide the learner with the skills to become a problem-solver.

14. Select curriculum which will emphasize the effects of interpersonal relations upon everyday life.

15. Use the community in the learning process.

The results of this study are by no means presented as absolute criteria. The number of teachers who had worked in APL programs long enough to be considered "experts" was small at this time. But the results do offer a suggested list for planning teacher training.[3]

Smith's determination of necessary competencies for ABE teachers tends to support many of Mocker's list. There is some overlap in competencies, such as:

--agencies and institutions found in the community;

--beliefs in responsive and responsible citizenry;

--the interpersonal skills of effectively relating oneself to family, community and society;

--career assessment techniques;

--the awareness of content in relation to the learner's objectives;

--relate classroom instruction to the job experiences of students;

--apply democratic principles to everyday life.

This study provides a list of competencies for beginning teachers and an additional list for experienced teachers.[4]

Lindsay and others included 1) teaching "coping skills; 2) the philosophy of functional competency as defined by the APL project; and 3) instructional techniques leading to APL functional competency, as possible in-service topics in Pennsylvania.[5] One interesting aspect of the rating of

these topics is that supervisors tended to rate them a bit higher than teachers in the order of priority.

This information regarding staff development is presented only as examples of some of the activities that are taking place in the area of re-directing training and planning for training.

Needed Research

Is CBAE another educational "fad"? Will CBAE meet the needs of adult students? Can content and skills be incorporated? Are teachers and administrators in favor of CBAE? Should credit be granted for prior knowledge? These are just a few of the questions that commonly emerge when discussion centers on competency-based adult education. Taylor and Fischer have both identified areas in need of further research. These include more research to determine competencies; assessing competencies; better ways to incorporate into instructional programs; employer acceptability; methods of evaluation; program development.[6] The list could go on.

Two significant events occurred in 1978 that have served to advance the exploration of critical issues, and to disseminate information regarding current practices. In February the U.S. Office of Education sponsored the National Invitational Workshop on Adult Competency Education. One major objective of this workshop was the in-depth consideration by participants, of a number of critical issues or questions relating to competency-based adult education.[7]

In June the National Invitational Workshop on Competency-Based Adult Education was conducted in Austin, Texas. This workshop was designed to bring together practitioners to address the areas of curriculum development, teacher training, competency-based high school diploma programs, research/assessment,

and administrative concerns. This publication is an out-growth of that conference.

The challenge is evident. The demand and interest in a competency-based approach to functional literacy would indicate that it is a concept to be considered and utilized.

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II. PROGRAMMATIC PERSPECTIVES

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND CBAE

"The Lancaster Plan"

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One of the results of the USOE Invitational Workshop on competency-based adult education (CBAE) held in Metairie, Louisiana, September 26-29, 1977 was the development of a functional definition of CBAE as "a performance-based process leading to demonstrated mastery of basic and life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in society." Any attempt to develop a unique curriculum leading toward such mastery for all ABE adults would necessitate a second meeting on Mount Sinai. Let us rather examine some of the issues that were faced in integrating CBAE into one adult education program, and developing a curriculum to meet the specific needs of one community as illustrated in "The Lancaster Plan."

CBAE and Least Educated Adults

ABE programs and consequently ABE administrators have recently been roasted for failure to reach least educated adults. Issues involved include fulltime teachers and prime time programs, provision of funds for transportation, babysitting and stipends, a pipeline into the community for recruitment and the development of low-level, high-interest adult materials. When faced with the alternative of reaching this audience or turning ABE over to community agencies, many adult educators are looking to CBAE for the answer. But a CBAE curriculum cannot be simply grafted onto the standard ABE program to produce roses from a corn stalk. Fundamental changes in ABE program design are necessary. ABE administrators have knocked their heads against a stone wall for years trying

to meet a fulltime problem with part-time funding and a program design dating back to the "naturalization classes" of the early 1900's. What changes can be made? Where can we look for help?

The Community Connection

The federal government has spent billions of dollars in the past decade to promote the general welfare and upgrade the skills and earning power of its least educated adults. State and local governments contribute added taxpayer dollars to the same pot. Neither the funding nor the responsibility for doing the job falls solely on education. In many communities a multiplicity of services too often means a duplication of effort, with the "least likely to succeed" living off the agency system while others' needs go unmet. In today's world of tightening budgets and bottom line accountability, the best solution to meeting the needs of least educated adults lies in a community pool of expertise and monies to do the job.

The Lancaster Plan. The Lancaster Plan began as a gleam in the eye of Lancaster's Community Action Program (CAP). Lancaster CAP, originally set up under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, is a private organization providing program resources to Lancaster's rural and urban poor. Believing that full employment is the logical answer to poverty, CAP turned to CETA, the Lancaster-Lebanon Employment Training Program to develop and fund a Work-Experience program for Lancaster County's undereducated, unskilled and unemployed adults.

In the summer of 1977, Lancaster-Lebanon CETA, like many of its kind throughout the nation, was under the gun to provide more services to the least educated and unskilled in the community. Consequently, they allocated nearly $1,000,000 of local Title I funds to this project. The stated goal was: To

provide the assessment, personal development and skills training necessary for an undereducated, unskilled adult to become a goal-directed, responsible, employed citizen. The skills training was to include both work experience and education. Therefore, Lancaster CETA turned to Intermediate Unit 13's adult education department (IU 13) and asked if we wanted to run a GED component to this program.

Expanding the Educational Horizon. The answer was "NO!" Although work-experience programs are usually wedded to GED components, ten years of experience working with least educated adults plus five years of exploring CBAE curriculum as a test site to the University of Texas' APL study suggested to us that there was a better way. We proposed an integrated CBAE program. CAP would provide the work experience and job attitudes training, IU would provide assessment, career guidance and an academic/life skills curriculum. Specific competencies viewed by the community, the staff and participants as essential to the program goal would be established. Participants would be certified for purposes of program raises, employment referrals and educational attainment according to their acquisition and demonstration of a continuum of competencies. Thus the Lancaster Plan was conceived and put into action as a joint effort on the part of CETA, CAP, and IU 13.

CETP Program Structure. Participants in the CAP Employment-Training program (CETP) are required to meet specific admission criteria. They must be unemployed 30 days or more, meet CETA low-income criteria and have no high school diploma or a tested educational or language deficiency. Of the 476 adults enrolled from October 1977 to September 1978, nearly half were below sixth grade level in reading or math, and over one-quarter were basic readers, limited English-speakers or mentally retarded adults. According to the APL life

skills tests, less than two percent could be classified as functioning proficiently upon program entrance. The problem of identifying and recruiting these adults was handled successfully in Lancaster by CAP case managers and in Lebanon by Department of Welfare case workers.

Minimum wage is paid to participants upon entry into the eighteen-week program. A raise is possible at the end of the six-week and twelve-week evaluation period as determined by in-school and work-site performance. Classes are limited to twelve to fifteen students in three and one-half hour morning or afternoon sessions. The rest of the day is spent at job-sites under the direction of CAP crew leaders. CAP further provides transportation to and from classes and work sites, and babysitters for those who need them. Despite these factors, regular attendance for this population is still a problem. However, program retention for the first year was a promising seventy-seven percent.

Most students remain in the program an average of thirteen weeks; job placement was considered a positive termination. Thus with six classes each serving twenty-five students daily, and with a quarterly class turnover, this two-county program could serve six hundred least educated adults at capacity operation.

A Price Ticket on Education. "But where do I find the money to pay fulltime teachers and aides? Where can I get free classroom space for forty hours a week? I will need an extra counselor and travel money for the staff. It just can't be done!"

Yes it can! Your LEA or college can contract directly with CETA to provide supplementary staff, equipment and rent to programs serving CETA participants. Just remember, both ABE and CETA are federal programs and neither can serve as local in-kind or matching funds for the other. Both programs are mandated to serve the same population. By combining efforts and sharing costs, the taxpayers as well as the participants come out winners.

Translating Competencies into Curriculum

Once you've made the community connection and established the framework for a viable CBAE program, the next step is determining curriculum. In any program designed to prepare the adult to become a responsible citizen of the community, the competencies established must reflect community values as well as participant needs. A community survey and a participant questionnaire are simple but necessary first steps in preparing for a CBAE program.

In Lancaster, we were lucky. Pennsylvania is in the process of examining high school graduation requirements and revising curriculum to meet the needs the community sees for its youth. Lancaster School District sent out a survey to 400 randomly-selected Lancaster City residents asking them to rate as important to non-important 71 different life competencies and to indicate which competencies should be graduation requirements. Seventy-five of those surveyed responded.

CETP participants and staff were given a similar questionnaire based on 100 life skills tasks categorized under the five APL areas. Participants were asked to rank the ten skills they wished most to acquire. Teachers were surveyed prior to administering the students' questionnaire. In comparing the Lancaster City and CETP study we found that the life skills the community rated essential for high school graduates were the same skills high school dropouts wanted most to acquire. It was also apparent that ABE teachers were extremely sensitive to these needs of their students. As a result of the two studies, forty-five life skills topics were established as part of the CETP curriculum (see Table I).

Breaking a Cardinal Rule: Time Constraints. Flexible time has been accepted as a basic tenet of CBAE. CBAE proponents recommend demonstrating minimum competencies for graduation in a flexible time frame. This concept of

TABLE I

LIFE SKILLS OBJECTIVES*

I. OCCUPATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

*1. Job interests and needs
2. Writing personal fact sheet
3. Understanding "help wanted" ads
4. Seeking employment by telephone
5. Writing a letter of application
*6. Filling out a job application
7. Understanding fringe benefits
8. Understanding payroll deductions
9. Understanding labor unions
10. Good work habits
11. Questions to ask possible employer
12. Preparing for the interview

Number of Completed Topics_____

II. CONSUMER EDUCATION

*1. Buying a new/used car
*2. Making a family budget
*3. Renting an apartment
*4. Consumer protection
*5. Buying insurance
6. Comparison shopping
7. Major appliance purchase
8. Checking account
9. Borrowing money
10. Savings account

Number of Completed Topics_____

III. HEALTH AND SAFETY

*1. Basic first aid
2. Danger signs of cancer
3. Home safety
4. Planned parenthood
5. Problems of drug abuse

SUPPLEMENTAL - 3 of 5

a. Heart disease
b. Planning well-balanced meals
c. Identify common illness
d. Mental health
e. Proper care of the sick

Number of Completed Topics_____

IV. GOVERNMENT AND LAW

1. Voter registration/using the ballot
*2. Legal rights for juveniles
Legal rights for adults
*3. Obtaining legal aid
*4. Federal income tax forms
*5. State and local tax forms

SUPPLEMENTAL - 2 of 4

a. Understanding legal papers
b. Social Security
c. How the court system works
d. How the government spends your taxes

Number of Completed Topics_____

V. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

1. Using a roap map
2. Using public transportation
3. Using public library
*4. How to get a drivers permit
*5. Contacting emergency services

SUPPLEMENTAL - 2 of 4

a. Making reservations
b. Road signs and signals
c. Recreational facilities
d. Educational opportunities

Number of Completed Topics_____

VI. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

(A Counseling Component)

1. Assessment/self evaluation
2. Values clarification
3. Decision making
4. Goal setting
5. Career search
6. Career action plan
7. Job or training search

Number of Completed Topics_____

*Those items starred indicate life skills objectives ranked by both students and teachers in the top five in order of importance in each APL category.

unlimited time is completely unrealistic when dealing with least educated adults. Time for education will always get short shrift when competing with time for any of Maslow's first level survival needs.

In the Lancaster Plan, an alternative to flexible time is possible. A continuum of academic, life skills and work attitude competencies is established and rewards are based on evidence of growth within a finite time period. This certification of growth indicating a willingness to learn and become a responsible employee has proved to be more important to most employers than a high school diploma. Until such a time as the community will accept this continuum of competencies in lieu of a diploma, efforts are being made to establish realistic criteria for an external diploma.

Currently seven of twenty-two school districts in the two-county area offer local diplomas to GED graduates who reside in the district or who last attended a district school. Another district has the matter under consideration. One school board requires that out-of-school youth and adults complete a life skills program or attain an APL 3 level before granting their district diploma.

Last April and May, IU 13 adult staff administered the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and the APL test to a stratified grouping of 25 graduating seniors in eleven area high schools. The results were used to establish a normative range of academic and coping skills for each district. This year, a similar testing program will be undertaken for special education and limited English speakers. An effort will then be launched to have these districts grant external diplomas on the basis of: 1) their established academic range; 2) life skills proficiencies equal to or higher than the high school seniors, and 3) successful work records or job-ready work attitudes as evidenced by performance rating in a work-experience or skills training program. This type of

external diploma could provide the motivated unskilled, unemployed adult with the support needed to make it into the mainstream of our society.

Teaching to All Levels. How do you handle a classroom where academic ability ranges from ESL orientation level to the pre-GED adult with a reading level of 8.5? ABE teachers have faced this problem with varying degrees of success for 15 years, but CBAE does make it easier. Individual assessment and student/teacher goal-setting identify areas to be mastered in basic and life skills. While students' academic levels vary, the basic knowledge competencies to be acquired are usually the same. Thus by accommodating for heterogeneous materials and learning levels within a homogeneous life skills curriculum, individual needs can be met while stimulating the group dynamics conducive to the learning and attitude-changing process. The provision of ESL, of special education and of basic reading itinerant tutors has been extremely helpful in the development of specialized curriculum as well as in classroom management. Trained volunteers and part-time aides funded through Office of Aging have also worked out well.

Identifying and Developing CBAE Materials

The Lancaster curriculum rests upon a continuum of life skills competencies and basic skills competencies to be mastered by the participant according to his level and ability within a finite time period (13 to 18 weeks). We involved our teachers in the process of selecting and/or developing materials that would best enable the participants to acquire the identified competencies. In this way, we were able to assist teachers to understand, accept and enrich the role of facilitator/teacher in a CBAE program.

A Word to the Wise. Many commercial materials are now available and more are being published every day that advertise their wares as competency-based.

Some of these, such as Cambridge's Reading for Survival series, PAR's Label packets, and Fearon-Pitman's new ABLEST readers and Lifeline series, were written by ABE practitioners well versed in CBAE. Others also provide the essential integration of reading, math and/or language skills with basic knowledge areas that will enable teachers to present academic and life skills concepts within the framework of one lesson.

Many informative bibliographies on ABE and APL materials and resources have been disseminated. A review of their abstracts followed by a review of the materials selected is the best way to quickly identify CBAE resources suited to your program needs. A new and excellent bibliography of this type is "APL/ABE Materials for Teaching Functional Literacy in North Dakota Programs," Dickinson Public School District, Dickinson, North Dakota.

Using 309 (310) Funds. Developing large-scale teacher-made instructional materials for CBAE programs has both advantages and hazards. Teachers engaged in such a process are never the same again. The chances are ninety-to-one that they will henceforth trade their old standby teacher's guide for a more eclectic approach to the selection and use of resources. In addition, materials produced are generally tailormade to fit program and participant needs. These two factors alone would be enough to make even a cautious administrator commit to the process. However, by the same token, there is significant time and money involved and also the knowledge that very few curriculum materials developed locally are transferable for regional or national dissemination. Nevertheless, when commercial materials do not meet your needs, state 309 (now 310) research and development funds are available. One of the best listings of CBAE teacher-produced curricula from 309 (310) projects is in the "Competency-Based Adult Education Profile," and "Son of Profile" compiled by James Parker, Division of Adult Education, USOE.

Revising and Standardizing Curriculum. No attempt was made to standardize the Lancaster curriculum until a whole year had passed. By April 1977, it became apparent that: 1) some teachers made more effective use of resource persons and media activities than others; 2) some teachers were intimidated by the breadth of information in a life skills curriculum and concentrated on academics as much as possible; 3) our counselor, realizing the relation between motivation, personal development, goal-planning and participant retention, began to search for counseling materials at a low-reading level; and 4) a resource library of commercial and teacher-made CBAE materials coded to life skills areas was needed.

While volumes of APL curriculum guides are now available, the time to read and digest them is not. Many teachers feel threatened by the vastness of the APL areas. They don't know where to begin to attack the whole subject. Many continue teaching those skills they feel most comfortable with and pay lip service to the rest of the content and skills. Previous experience has taught that a highly-structured curriculum devised by a curriculum specialist and imposed upon classroom teachers without their input does not work--no matter how good it is. So, we applied for a 309 Minigrant, "APL Made Easy," to aid teachers and the program through this transition.

"APL Made Easy" is simply a set of 100 laminated cards dealing with the twenty-five topics identified as high need areas. Inexpensive to produce, stored handily in a card case in each classroom, and as easy as following a recipe, these cards identify: 1) teacher preparation; 2) basic skills to be learned; 3) activities best suited to attaining the desired competency; 4) demonstration of the competency; and 5) individual utilization of the competency.

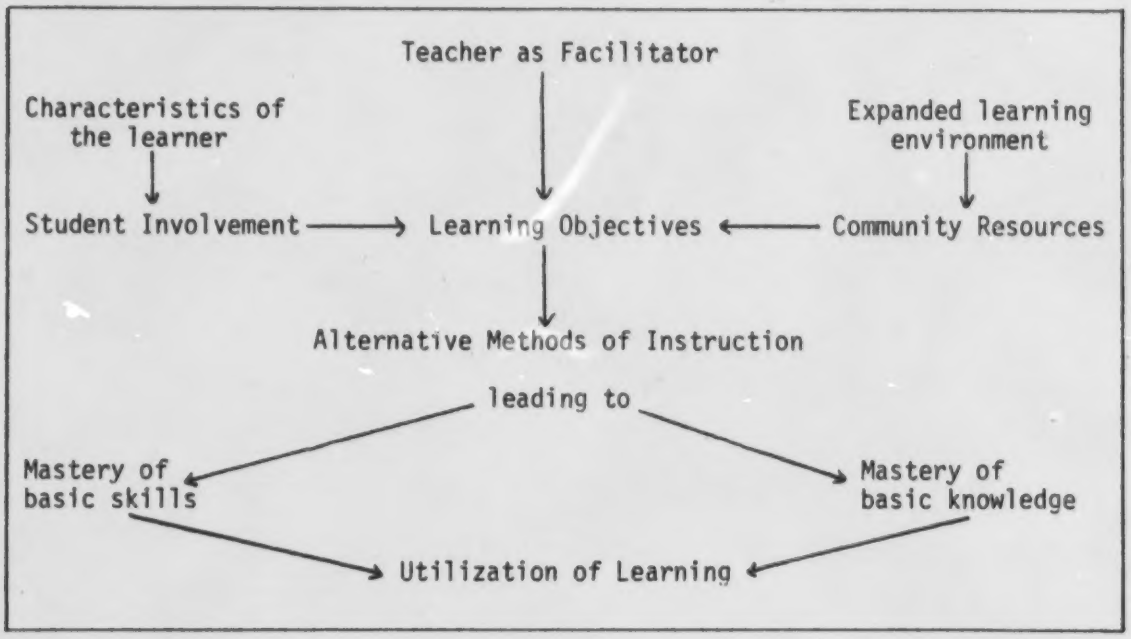
When the card catalog is complete, all teachers will have at least one way to handle each identified life skill. A variety of activities will be assured within the curriculum. Basic texts and supplemental materials will be agreed upon and coded for library use. As teachers develop alternative activities, resources or materials, these can easily be carded and disseminated so that eventually The Lancaster Plan will offer a variety of activities leading to proficiency in the life skills areas--all teacher researched, developed, tested, and accepted.

CBAE and the Bottom Line

CBAE is both a program and a process. Putting the program into an established structure requires research, development, and determination. This sequence has already been accomplished through The Lancaster Plan. Modeling the process into standard program procedure requires an understanding of and commitment to CBAE philosophy by program staff. This involvement requires a fundamental change in the role of the teacher and the interrelation between staff, student and the community.

The following model of the CBAE process is being tested as an integral part of The Lancaster Plan.

The CBAE Process



In the CBAE classroom, the teacher's primary role is as a facilitator of learning. Identifying student needs, the teacher works with the individual to determine learning objectives. This must be done with an eye to the student's relation to the community and the resources the community can commit to the learning process. A method of instruction is selected which meets the individual's unique pattern of learning and leads to mastery of basic skills and knowledge. The end product or bottom line of CBAE and all education is not merely skill/knowledge mastery but the future utilization of this learning for the benefit of the individual.

The CBAE program that provides training in mastering "the learning process" as well as practice in acquiring life skills competencies is well on its way to preparing least educated adults to function proficiently in society.

COMPETENCY-BASED ADULT EDUCATION IN PRE-GED AND GED PROGRAMS:

A CASE STUDY OF THE LOUISIANA EXPERIENCE

by

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Introduction

When the results of the Adult Performance Level Study were announced by the University of Texas in 1973, it immediately took the forefront as the most significant development in the adult education program since the advent of federal funds in 1965. Essentially, the Adult Performance Level Project redefined the concept of literacy, developed an instrument to assess the functional literacy of adults and, thus, specified those competencies which were functional to adult life. The overriding implication of the study for adult education was that these competencies would become the core of objectives for adult basic education programs.

However, the reality of making the transition from research to practice presents numerous obstacles. The degree to which new approaches, ideas, concepts, etc. are infused into any existing system is directly dependent upon the status of current programs, with reference to structure, personnel, future directions and developments, and credentialing and evaluation criteria. Initially, misunderstanding surfaced due to the fact that many practitioners viewed the Adult Performance Level Study as a new program, a new acronym, a complete and different system of instructional approach, content, materials; a system intended to replace existing ABE instructional activities.

Differences of opinion immediately surfaced between competency- and skill-based advocates. Skill-based proponents were hesitant to accept the premise that the skills intermingled in a competency-based instructional approach were sufficient to provide the student with adequate improvement in basic skills. They were also concerned that the skills within this framework were sufficient to enable the student to meet existing credentialing requirements and evaluation purposes. Additionally, the competency-based assessment and evaluation instruments were not readily available. Those instruments that were accessible were viewed with a great degree of skepticism with relation to their validity and their future acceptance by the general public outside the field of competency-based education.

Compounding this entire situation was the fact that competency-based adult education activities would represent change. Adult education instructional personnel had been trained for the past few years in employing individualized skill-based instructional techniques, had refined their approaches through years of experience, and were just beginning to feel comfortable with these approaches.

Although numerous other opinions, comments and other points of view have been debated concerning the competency-based/skill-based issue, the crucial concern for influencing present programs was the need for practical and meaningful information, researched and documented to give validity to competency-based approaches. The dominant issue of this documentation and research, however, must focus its response to the practitioners--not necessarily to the theorist or the professional researcher. This situation was especially true for adult education personnel in Louisiana. These practitioners had been trained specifically in skill-based instructional approaches through

the implementation of individualized prescription programs of instruction for adult students. This concern was the key focus for the Louisiana consideration of competency-based adult education.

Initial Efforts

It was recognized that specific practical activities and cooperative efforts must be undertaken. Those activities, begun in 1975-76, focused on pioneering efforts at implementation of APL curriculum by volunteering local education agencies throughout the state on a self-funded basis--a testimony to the interest of the educators in APL activities. The efforts became more organized with the coordination of two funded projects--the Region VI APL Curriculum Development Project funded by the University of Texas, and the Louisiana Tech University Research and Curriculum Development Project. Through this collaborative effort, ten local education agencies in Louisiana utilized the University of Texas APL testing program, instructional materials, and procedures in their existing adult education programs. These programs had the distinction of being one of the first state efforts to conduct comparative studies involving adult literacy instructional programs.

The first major coordinating effort in this project was a statewide conference in 1976. The conference was planned to determine the extent of activities needed to provide orientation to those personnel interested in piloting the APL materials, and to disseminate all procedures and materials to be used with the APL activities. As a result of this conference, ten local school systems enthusiastically agreed to participate in this initial effort.

As a second coordinating effort, fifteen local adult education personnel from the same school systems were selected to assist the Tech staff in the development of an APL curriculum guide for Louisiana. Another phase of

this endeavor involved development of the Tri-State Conference on APL in cooperation with the Louisiana and Arkansas State Departments of Education, The University of Arkansas, and the University of Texas APL Project. This conference of educators provided the initial ideas for development of curriculum guides around each of the five APL general knowledge areas. These ideas were extended and refined at a three-day workshop during which fifteen local adult education personnel, the Tech staff, members from the State Department and from the University of Texas worked to develop an APL curriculum guide for instructional use in Louisiana. The curriculum guide, approximately 400 pages in length, was finalized in May, 1976, and made available for dissemination.

The product of these collaborative workshops, the Louisiana Tech APL Curriculum Guide, is organized as a series of task modules for each general knowledge area of APL. Each module follows the same format as identified below.

1. A stated instructional goal.
2. Set of specific performance objectives.
3. A series of learning tasks for each objective. The tasks, designed to help the learner attain the desired competencies, are presented in categories of teacher activities, learner activities, and resources.

The APL activities initiated as a result of the first coordinating efforts in the various systems were varied with some programs offering more extensive activities than others. These pilot sites successfully stimulated "hands on" activities in local ABE programs with the APL Survey and APL instructional activities. These preliminary activities placed the state in a much better position to follow through and attempt to develop a structured study concerning state implementation of APL based curriculum for adult programs.

Basically, the following accomplishments may be cited as a result of the 1975-76 pilot activities:

1. An APL curriculum guide designed specifically for Louisiana's adult program was developed.

2. A variety of instructional materials based upon APL objectives were developed.

3. Testing results, although limited, indicated that adult education students in traditional adult classes have not received instruction in all areas of competencies as designated by the APL objectives; and although adults are improving their grade level achievement, they may not be mastering those specific competency-based skills needed to successfully cope with today's society.

4. A greater realization of the potential of APL based curriculum programs was acknowledged by those participating systems; and because of this, they were receptive to engaging in more structured activities concerning the pilot studies and the implementation of APL programs.

Second Year Focus

Based upon the recommendations of those local systems involved in the limited pilot activities conducted during 1975-76, the second year of the Louisiana APL Pilot Project sought to establish statewide coordination of all APL activities in cooperation with the University of Texas Region VI APL Project, Louisiana Tech University, and those local school systems involved in the pilot programs.

The overall objectives for the 1976-77 APL Pilot Project, entitled "Louisiana Adult Performance Level Pilot Study - A Comparative Analysis of APL Competency-Based Instructional Programs," were as follows:

1. Initiate a structured, comparative study utilizing experimental and control groups in local adult education programs to compare the credibility of APL competency-based instructional programs with traditional adult education instructional activities in an effort to determine--

a. correlation between grade level achievement and APL objectives;

b. impact on the retention of adult students;

c. any cost factor differential between APL instructional activities and traditional programs;

d. strengths and weaknesses of the APL instructional programs;

e. students' evaluation of APL based programs.

2. Continue APL pilot activities engaged in the development of specific instructional materials based upon APL objectives.

3. Continue regional coordination of APL activities in an effort to share and disseminate materials and information and to utilize the expertise of the national APL staff in the implementation of pilot activities and training of local staff.

4. Develop expertise on the staff of a state university in the specific area of the Adult Performance Level Study.

As the first step in attaining the objectives, a Fall workshop was conducted by Louisiana Tech for the purposes of project orientation, distribution of materials, and organization of the instructional programs of the ten local pilot sites. A monitoring workshop was conducted in Spring, 1977, where project site reports and staff presentations were given. Final evaluation and recommendations were made at a closing workshop, held in July, 1977.

The sample for the study was reduced since four sites were discontinued because of lack of administrative support from the local level, scheduling problems, and student reaction to the study. However, with the six local programs continuing, a total of 236 students were involved in the study. Only those students who had both pre and post test scores were included in the final analysis.

Adults enrolled in both the experimental and control groups were administered two tests--pre-California Achievement Test (CAT) and the Adult

Performance Level (APL) Survey. Preference was given to those adults who scored below the ninth grade on the initial CAT for inclusion in the study. The study was conducted for not less than six months at each site.

The program of study for the experimental group (APL) related lessons to competencies necessary for meeting the requirements of adult living today as identified in the original APL study at the University of Texas. The control group participated in a traditional adult education program. Records were kept and updated by teachers at each site.

Basically, the experimental APL groups outperformed the traditional control groups in grade level achievement, APL upgrading, retention, and average hours of attendance. The results of this study dispelled many of the apprehensions that the skill-based oriented adult education teachers had regarding the viability of an APL instructional approach providing adequate skill-based achievement. The overall response from teachers, students, and local supervisory personnel involved in the study was very positive toward the content of an APL instructional program and was evaluated as being more meaningful to the everyday needs of adults.

Based upon the findings of the study and the recommendations of those local adult education personnel involved in the APL pilot activities, it was felt that the last major hurdle which an APL instructional program should address itself to, before statewide training is initiated, is the adult high school GED preparation program. It was also the consensus of the pilot personnel that the APL curriculum guide should be revised and improved based upon the pilot activities and that activities should be initiated to develop a statewide training and dissemination program on APL for all local adult education personnel.

Third Year Activities

Based upon these recommendations, the third year of pilot activities was initiated through the Louisiana Tech Adult Performance Level Research and Curriculum Design Project for 1977-78. The project involved the assistance of the University of Texas APL Project and five participating local school systems. The main goals of the project were:

1. to compare the traditional adult education program with the APL program in regard to GED testing (preference was given to adult students who scored above the ninth grade on the initial CAT for inclusion in the study);

2. to revise and improve the Louisiana Tech APL Curriculum Guide for distribution throughout the state to local adult education programs.

In implementing the project, Louisiana Tech conducted three APL training workshops during the year. One workshop, conducted at the initiation of the pilot activities, was to train local personnel involved in the pilot programs in the organization of their local pilot study and in the utilization of the total APL curriculum system, including the University of Texas instructional modules and the Louisiana Tech APL Curriculum Guide.

The second workshop was held for the purpose of assisting the local pilot personnel in finalizing all results of the pilot activities and assimilating the information for the final report and recommendations.

One statewide workshop presented a finalized report on all Louisiana APL activities. The program was designed to present a summary of all APL pilot and research results, disseminate copies of the revised APL Curriculum Guide, and to preview the APL awareness/orientation training program. Invitations were extended to all local school systems in Louisiana interested in initiating APL training activities for local adult education personnel for the following year.

The 1977-78 Louisiana APL research was conducted in four sites in Louisiana with students achieving above the 9.0 level on the CAT. Five hundred and sixteen students were involved in the final analysis. Students involved became part of either the control group or the experimental group. The control group received instruction in the traditional GED adult education program while the experimental group was taught through an APL-based program. Division of students into groups allowed a comparison to be made of the percentage of dropouts from each program. Students recommended for GED did so by meeting either the traditional standard (13.0 on the total battery of the CAT with no subject matter area below 12.0) or the alternative APL standard (34 or above on the ACT and 10.0 on the CAT). Students could be recommended for GED testing through either standard, regardless of group association.

Analysis of data indicated by observation that not only did the highest percentage of initial recommendations for GED testing come through the APL criteria, but this standard also produced the highest percentage of students passing GED of those initially recommended. It was also found that the dropout rate was lower for the group receiving APL instruction than for the group receiving traditional instruction.

There was general agreement that in Louisiana's program, APL did not fit students functioning above the ninth-grade level in the GED program as well as it had been received with ABE students functioning below the ninth-grade level. Basic instructional guides for initial utilization by teachers in implementing an APL instructional program are needed, coupled with extensive teacher training activities.

Summary

The recommendations stemming from the results of the three years of Louisiana APL pilot activities were as follows:

1. that a new assessment instrument to evaluate adult performance level criteria be developed or obtained for use in Louisiana;

2. that the 13.0 grade level requirement with no subject matter area less than 12.0 on a standardized achievement test be retained as Louisiana's qualifying criteria for recommendation of adult students to take the GED test;

3. that APL instructional materials and activities be integrated into the existing ABE program (students functioning below the ninth-grade level) and that an adult proficiency certificate be developed on the state level for issuance to those ABE students who successfully demonstrate proficiency in life-coping skills;

4. that the operational manual for implementing APL-based instructional activities in local adult education programs be utilized as the basic guide for teacher initiation of APL instructional activities in local ABE programs;

5. that the term APL or competency-based education be eliminated in reference to teacher training activities or specific references in curriculum material and that the concept be approached as simply that of improving adult basic education curriculum; and

6. that statewide teacher training activities be initiated to introduce APL concepts, materials, and techniques to all local adult education personnel. It is suggested that the program be coordinated with those higher education institutions in the state currently supporting adult education teacher training activities.

In addition to the overall recommendations, there were four major areas of concern recognized by the APL pilot project staff members as a result of the 1977-78 Louisiana Tech Project. The first area involved utilization of the APL Survey. Basically, the forty-item survey was a major weakness in the overall project activities because forty items were not adequate to accurately assess student competencies in life-coping skills and could not be used as a credentialing instrument; utilization of only one form of the test made retesting a

problem; there was difficulty in the use of the test as a diagnostic instrument for prescribing an instructional program; and utilization of the survey instrument with those adults functioning above the ninth-grade level in the GED program was a problem due to the fact that the vast majority of the students scored above average on the initial examination or required very few instructional activities in order to score above average on the second test.

As far as overall student attitude was concerned, when given a choice of instructional approaches, students liked the APL alternative (as defined in the study); however, often the materials were poorly received. Utilization of the University of Texas APL Modules involved too extensive an instructional program for students functioning on a 9.0 grade level and above who needed only brief refresher activities in APL content areas. The content of the APL material was viewed as being very meaningful to the adult student. However, most students requested more instructional activities in specific skill areas such as math and language in order to adequately prepare for the GED test.

Another area of concern focused on teacher training. Three of the four pilot sites involved personnel who had received previous APL training and were involved in prior pilot activities. The one pilot site in which the teachers had not received specific APL training reinforced the fact that most adult education teachers were ill-prepared to function effectively in an APL based curriculum. It was apparent that more individual attention was required when teachers were neither adequately prepared nor had available instructional resources at hand to implement an APL based program. It was concluded from the experience that sufficient time be allotted for proper integration of APL content and instructional approaches into the existing programs.

The national APL study has had a tremendous impact on all areas of adult education. It re-defined the traditional concept of "literacy" in

today's society and substantiated the need for competency-based instructional activities, materials, evaluation and credentialing criteria, in local adult education programs.

Louisiana's APL pilot projects laid the groundwork for statewide implementation of competency-based instructional offerings in local adult programs. If for no other reason, these pilot activities must be viewed as successful; for without these initial efforts, competency-based adult education programs would not have been as easily accepted and/or incorporated by local adult educators.

THE INTEGRATION OF COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION INTO AN ADULT ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM

by

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CB/ESL: What It Is

Until recently English as a Second Language curriculum and methodology have focused on the teaching of the formal grammatical system of the English language. In this teacher/subject-centered approach, exemplified by grammar translation, memorized dialogues and audio-lingual drills, the learner has been assigned the role of passive receiver. He/she has had little or no responsibility in the language acquisition/learning process.

However, a growing disenchantment with traditional methods and a dramatic shift towards an emphasis on the role of the learner have emerged within the last few years. The student has been encouraged to become more actively and creatively involved in the learning process, while the teacher has become more of a classroom manager or facilitator of learning.

This new stress on the personal involvement of the learner in functional language use as well as recently mandated program accountability is having a strong influence on ESL instruction, especially at the adult level. This influence is evidenced by such approaches as the Silent Way, Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning, the Notional-Functional syllabus, APL/ESL, and competency-based ESL, all of which endeavor to involve the whole person in the learning situation.

The goal of CB/ESL, the focus of this paper, is the demonstrated ability of the students to apply a knowledge of the English language and communication skills to content or topic areas in order to deal effectively with their adult life activities. Life skill objectives become the content used in teaching students to comprehend, speak, read, and write the English language. Lessons focus on criterion-referenced performance objectives leading to attainment of functional competency in actual adult life situations. Objectives and curriculum materials used in a CB/ESL program are determined by assessing the real life needs of the students in relation to the community in which they live.

Evaluation of student progress is based on competency objectives and is an essential component of CB/ESL. Evaluation is performance-oriented, assessing the learners not only by paper and pencil tests but also by a demonstration of proficiencies in life-role situations. CB/ESL is communication-oriented; therefore, what the students say holds greater value than how they say it. "We cannot teach for creativeness in language use with functional comprehension and comprehensibility as the ultimate criteria and then test for mere accuracy of detail, as most standard tests seem to do at present."[1] The students should know exactly what competencies they must demonstrate. When they feel they have mastered a specified competency, they test. If they have reached the criterion level, they move on. The students, thus, become responsible for their own learning.

The integration of competency-based goals into an adult ESL program requires the development or adaptation of specialized curriculum materials. Most commercial materials are designed for mass sales, for a composite average class.[2] CB/ESL teachers must adapt, edit, or change existing tests and other instructional materials for them to be appropriate to meet the needs of their classes.

Curriculum materials for CB/ESL may be adapted and developed by using any number of systematic approaches. The following guidelines are based on the process demonstrated by the California Adult Competency Education Project (CACE) in its statewide staff development program.[3]

A Competency-Based Approach to ESL Curriculum Development (General)

1. Collect target population data.
   a. Prepare and administer a community needs assessment to assist in prioritizing local core competencies. By responding to a needs assessment questionnaire members of the community who have contact with non-English and limited-English speakers can assist in the determination of needs of those who are to be served by the curriculum.
   b. Administer student needs assessment. "The current chicken-egg debate (do we adapt content to competencies, do we adapt competencies to content, or do we dichotomize the entire curriculum structure) is moot if the student does not perceive what is offered as being personally meaningful. . . The adoption of a curriculum consisting of exclusively the 65 APL objectives for use with persons of limited English-speaking ability would, therefore, appear to have little practicality for th[illegible] group."[4]
   c. Analyze needs assess[illegible]ents in relation to student l[illegible]vels, backgrounds, and goals.
2. Determine which competencies are to be included. Base decisions on information collected from both the community and student needs assessments.
3. Determine major function to be served by life skills content materials.
   a. information/knowledge

b. communication skills

c. decision making/problem solving

4. Write the measurable performance objectives necessary to achieve each selected competency. Include both the cognitive (facts, knowledge, recall, recognition) and affective (feelings, values, interests, reactions) domains.

5. Decide which materials should be acquired, adapted, and/or developed to meet specific individual or classroom needs.

6. Determine the appropriate method of evaluation to assess each objective.

   a. Consider various alternatives (criterion-referenced): paper and pencil, role-playing, paired activities, performance tasks, teacher observation.

   b. Design pre-post tests.

7. Write or adapt teaching/learning activities appropriate for each objective and the assessment.

   a. Determine for each objective the content, the grammatical structures having a high probability of occurrence in the topic area, and the instructional strategies.

   b. Using diverse strategies including individual study, small group work, teacher-directed lessons, real life (community-centered) tasks, paired activities, role-playing and simulation, peer instruction, and audio-visual reinforcement.

      (Teaching/learning activities which stress student interaction, especially in small groups, are encouraged. In small groups, the focus of learning shifts from the teacher or subject matter to the learner. Students become their own resource persons,

use their varying knowledge and abilities to assist each other, and obtain immediate feedback and reinforcement.)

c. Design supplementary or reinforcement activities as needed to insure competency achievement. (Learners must have opportunities to continue employing the learned behavior in the various situations they encounter.)

8. Select teaching materials for each objective.
   a. Collect and incorporate applicable commercial materials (text and audio-visual), realia, and materials from the functional world of adults (bus schedules, applications, labels, catalogs, maps, etc.).
   b. Write new material if necessary.
   c. Review and critique the materials before using.
9. Develop revision guidelines and criteria.
   a. Do the materials teach to the objectives?
   b. Do the materials relate to current student needs?
   c. Do students achieve both communicative and functional competence?

An Attempt to Develop and Implement CB/ESL (Specific)

In 1975 a committee of ESL instructors in the adult program of the San Diego Community College District revised the ESL program course of study using the CACE approach for curriculum development. The immediate need was to create instructional units which would enable adult students to acquire oral communication skills needed to function in day-to-day survival situations.

The curriculum development project included writing two basic survival English tests, one for Beginning level ESL students and the other for Intermediate-Advanced students. The project also designed and produced various audio-visual support materials.

The basic texts consist of ten units at each level in the following content areas:

I. Personal Identification
II. Foods
III. Health
IV. Transportation
V. Housing
VI. Clothing
VII. Jobs
VIII. Banking-Post Office
IX. Community Resources
X. Government and Law

Each unit contains a set of competency objectives, a structure focus, pre-post tests, topic or situational dialogues, content and structure practice exercises, visuals, and supplemental student activities.

The performance-stated objectives designate functional competencies that students are to achieve. The objectives selected have been determined to be high priority needs of the target population.

Since this curriculum material is designed primarily to develop oral communication skills, competency objectives and their evaluations are stressed. Structure proficiency is assessed as the student responds orally and/or in writing to the pre-post assessment tasks. Teachers are encouraged to adapt the questions and/or tasks to the needs and level of their classes. If the pre-test indicates student competency in certain areas, those areas are omitted in the instruction. Only those sections which are needed are taught.

Each unit contains basic dialogues related to a situational setting. Each dialogue, with its practices and activities, is independent and can be used separately in whatever order best meets students' needs. There is no specific ordered exposure to the grammar of the language. "There is no reason to expect that what we identify as being semantically necessary to the learner will coincide with what is grammatically the most simple, the most regular, or the

easiest to learn."[5] A series of practice exercises, directly related to the context of the dialogue, follows each dialogue and serves as reinforcement of the basic vocabulary, structure, and content for each unit. Visuals, picture sequences, filmstrips, and audio-cassettes depicting real-life survival situations are incorporated as both teaching and testing devices.

The final and most crucial step in each lesson is for the students to reconstruct the dialogue, generating their own language and adapting the dialogue to communicate in a simulated real-life situation.

Conclusion

The inability to speak and understand the English language poses a formidable barrier to survival in today's complex society. Adult students enter ESL programs with a wide variety of backgrounds, abilities, and goals; all need to acquire a knowledge of English, but in varying degrees and for vastly different reasons. CB/ESL is a highly effective program to provide these adults with a maximum opportunity for success.

Survival content, combined with instruction in English structure and usage, constitute the core of a CB/ESL curriculum. In CB/ESL, students are provided opportunities to work at their own pace, capability, and interest levels. The focus is on materials relevant to actual situations in their immediate environment. There is continuous evaluation of the students' progress in relation to their goals and objectives. This evaluation is based on communicative rather than linguistic competence--the ability to actually perform particular life skills or tasks, not just to know about them.

A CB/ESL curriculum designed to meet the expressed goals and needs of students, is immediately meaningful and significant. It serves the dual purpose

of providing relevance for the elements of language while assisting adult students to function effectively in their daily lives.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: A portion of a competency-based course of study outline demonstrating how both functional competency and grammatical structure can be incorporated into an adult ESL program.

Appendix B: A section from the Health unit of the CB/ESL curriculum project demonstrating specific lesson components.

Complete course of study outline and student needs assessment questionnaire are available on request. For further information, please contact Adult and Continuing Education, San Diego Community College District, 5350 University Avenue, San Diego, California 92105, 714/280-7610.

Appendix A

TITLE OF COURSE: English as a Second Language - Intermediate Level 300 - 400

PREREQUISITE: Level 200 or equivalent

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Stresses the development of greater fluency of skills in functioning in real life situations: speaking, listening, reading, writing, problem solving, and comprehending the social contexts in which these activities take place. Emphasizes the language skills needed to understand and speak with sufficient accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in casual conversations about work, family and current events.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES:

Upon successful completion of the intermediate level course, the students will show orally, in writing or through demonstration that they are able to:

I. Speak and understand sufficient English to enable them to handle adult requirements in the following areas:

   A. Personal Identification and Communication

      1. Give upon request self-identification and personal information as to: education, marital status, present and previous employment.

         Structure Focus: Prepositions of place in, on, at, near
         Present and past tense of to be

      2. Identify periods of time in days, months and years.

         Structure Focus: Prepositions of time in, on, at
         Embedded WH - questions

      3. Request information about and make long distance and emergency calls.

         Structure Focus: Modal Auxiliaries can, may, would
         Interrogatives, affirmative and negative

      4. Use the telephone book to obtain information.

         Structure Focus: Causal have
         Past Tense Irregular Verbs

B. Food and Money

1. Define and use common U.S. weights, measures, and sizes and use various denominations of money.

   Structure Focus: Noun Determiners some/any, much/many, few/little, a lot of
   Verb + infinitive

2. Explain food classifications and request information regarding location of foods in a market.

   Structure Focus: Count and Mass Nouns. Sentences with there is and there are

3. Discuss the principles of comparison shopping differentiating between various types of food stores.

   Structure Focus: Comparative and Superlative Adjectives
   Question words how much, how many

C. Health Care

1. Describe common medical problems giving symptoms and using appropriate verbs.

   Structure Focus: Present Perfect
   Modal auxiliaries should, must, have to, have got to

2. Discuss the function and availability of public health facilities.

   Structure Focus: Clauses of result
   Present Perfect

3. Recognize the difference between prescription and non-prescription medicines.

   Structure Focus: Imperatives, affirmative and negative
   Causal Auxiliaries have, make

4. Respond effectively to health emergencies.

   Structure Focus: Imperatives
   Modal Auxiliary should

D. Transportation

1. Ask for and give directions.

   Structure Focus: Imperatives
   Prepositional phrases of place

2. Use the telephone to obtain travel information.

   Structure Focus: Questions with how and which
   The expression would like to

3. Recognize and identify common highway signs.

   Structure Focus: Past Continuous
   For, during, when, while

4. Use printed transportation schedules.

   Structure Focus: Either/or
   Indefinite pronouns

Appendix B

Course Title: ESL Intermediate — Estimated Time: 6 Hours

Learning Sequence: Dangers of Poison

Module Objectives: Students will show orally, in writing, or through demonstration that they are able to:

A. Discuss dangers of keeping poisons in reach of children
B. Give Poison Information Center number
C. Role-play an emergency telephone call to the Poison Center

Structure Focus: Review of present continuous tense
Modal auxiliaries: should, could, might

CONTENT	SKILL	TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES	RESOURCES	EVIDENCE OF EVALUATION
		Pre-test	Teacher-made Pre-test	Teacher observation
Poisons are dangerous. Poisons should be kept in a safe place.	Listening/ speaking	Present filmstrip and audio-cassette "Poisons in the Home"	Filmstrip: "Poisons in the Home"	
	Listening	Present poison dialogue	"A Poisoning"	
	Listening/ speaking	Students practice, then role-play dialogue		
Procedure for calling Poison Information Center or doctor	Speaking/ vocabulary building	Show poison unit picture sequences one at a time in sequence	"Poisons Under the Sink," Survival English Picture sequences	

Appendix B (cont'd.)

CONTENT	SKILL	TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES	RESOURCES	EVIDENCE OF EVALUATION
	Reading/ Speaking/ Interacting/ Writing	Students label, identify, and describe each situation. Students discuss each situation responding to the following questions: What is happening? What could/might happen? What should be done if a poisoning occurs? What should/could the parents do to prevent this type of accident? Teacher writes key vocabulary on board. Students role-play similar situation. Students write sentences or paragraphs telling the story.		
	Speaking	Post-test: Show filmstrip "Poisons in the Home." Have students supply narrative and/or dialogue.	Filmstrip "Poisons in the Home"	Teacher judgment of student participation

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COMPETENCY-BASED ADULT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION:

TWO MODELS FOR FUTURE GROWTH

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In a continuing effort to develop and upgrade vocational programs which will benefit the changing needs of adults, adult vocational educators in Alabama developed two projects which have had nation-wide attention. The Competency-Based Adult Vocational Education (CBAVE, 1978) project developed by The Department of Vocational and Adult Education at Auburn University based their project on the assumption that in order to be successful in a job, adults need to be competent in both job-knowledge, skills, and general life-coping skills. The second project, The Performance-Based Adult Vocational Education (PAVE, 1978) project developed by the Division of Vocational Education, Alabama State Department of Education, was based on two major problem areas in adult vocational education:

(1) assessment of individual competencies upon entering an instructional program, and

(2) utilization of job relevance content to train individuals to perform at performance competency levels.

The Competency-Based Adult Vocational Education (CBAVE) Project

The primary function of the CBAVE Project was the development of a model for infusion of general life-coping skills or competencies into vocational curriculum. Utilizing the knowledge that people absorb information more quickly and efficiently at the time of personal need, life-coping skills were taught when specific information was needed to complete a job skill. For example, letter writing was taught in an auto mechanics class when it became apparent that equipment and supplies would have to be ordered from a catalog. The

skill of letter writing might not be pertinent to all vocational areas, but the model allowed for its incorporation, where appropriate.

The sixty-four general life-coping skills used in this model were identified in the Adult Performance Level (APL) study conducted by the University of Texas. These competencies were in the areas of occupational knowledge, community resources, health, government and law, and consumer economics.

The model was developed around the following ten components:

(1) Local administrators' support

(2) Instructor orientation program

(3) Pretest/Post-test

(4) Priority ranking of objectives

(5) Identifying and securing resources

(6) Selection of methods and techniques

(7) Continued assistance from project personnel

(8) Evaluation

(9) Assessment of the model

(10) Informal instructor evaluation

1. Local Administrators' Support. Adult vocational education classes in Alabama are held in many different types of schools, recreation areas, industry, etc. This project selected instructors who held their classes in two different types of school settings which necessitated gaining the support of two different groups of administrators. Four instructors held their class in post-secondary institutions which meant that support for the project and permission for instructor participation had to be gained from the president of the institution.

The other eight instructors in the project held their classes in secondary institutions, either Area Vocational Centers or a combination high

school and vocational school. Approval for instructors to participate was gained from the superintendent of schools of the district in which the school was located.

2. Instructor Orientation Program. The instructor orientation program at Auburn took the form of a weekend workshop. The overall objective of the workshop was that the instructors would be able to infuse APL objectives and learning activities with vocational objectives and learning activities.

3. Pretest/Post-test. The pretest is considered a necessary diagnostic tool. The pretest helps the instructor to set priorities for both the class as a whole and/or for individuals. All adults who registered for the vocational classes taught by instructors in this project were pretested. At the conclusion of the vocational classes, all adults still enrolled were post-tested.

The Adult APL Survey published by the American College Testing Program was used for both pre- and post-testing. Instructors did not, as a rule, test for vocational competencies.

4. Priority ranking of objectives. The ranking of objectives is based on (a) the needs as diagnosed on the pretest, and (b) the nature of the vocational skill being taught. A Need Assessment Form was developed to enable the instructor to plan an individual competency-based program for each adult learner, based on the ranking of objectives.

5. Identifying and securing resources and 6. Selection of methods and techniques. These two components of the model were necessarily tied together. Instructors completed an instructional planning sheet for each learner. Sources of materials and ideas for activities were suggested in Auburn University's Adult Competency Instructional Guide and other similar guides. The Alabama instructors used their adult learners as sources when possible.

V-Tecs catalogs, a series of catalogs of objectives and performance guides developed by the Vocational-Technical Consortium of States for various vocational teaching areas, were used by several of the instructors in the project. The detail with which learner performance is described in V-Tecs catalogs served as an asset in infusing APL competencies. The use of these catalogs and other competency based curriculum materials assisted the instructors by presenting suggested analysis of steps in each task which the learner was expected to perform.

7. Continued assistance from project personnel. Project personnel assistance was necessary because unique situations call for individual aid and guidance. Auburn personnel worked on-site and by phone with the individual instructors and also conducted three project workshops in which the instructors could share problems as well as progress.

8. Evaluation. The project was evaluated using the following two methods: (a) Assessment of the Model, using a pretest/post-test comparison and (b) Informal Instruction Evaluation.

(a) Assessment of the Model. The 12 project instructors pretested and post-tested the 179 adults in their adult vocational classes using the APL Adult Survey published by The American College Testing Program. Only the scores of 134 learners who had both pre- and post-test scores were used. In this study, the correlated t-test (Edwards, 1979) was used to determine if there was a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores.

Using the t-test of correlated means, a significant difference of the .05 level of significance was found.

(b) Informal Instructor Evaluation. The instructors presented the formal evaluations of class learner response and classroom

participation at the final project workshop. This evaluation was video-taped for future reference.

Summary

From the learners' pre- and post-test scores and the informal teacher evaluation, the model was found to be effective for the participating group. However, several limiting factors to this model should be noted: (1) not all of the 64 objectives listed by the APL study were taught in any class. The number of objectives taught were necessitated by the needs of the learners and the nature of the vocational area; (2) several objectives taught in one vocational area were not applicable to another vocational area; (3) due to the needs of the adults, objectives taught differed in the same vocational areas; e.g., map reading was taught in an urban body class but was not found necessary in a class held in a rural area.

Additional research suggested by the CBAVE study included the recommendation that the study be replicated using randomly selected instructors, divided into experimental and control groups and include a wider representation of vocational areas. Also it was recommended that a comparison study be made of the technical skills of vocational learners in APL infused vocational classes and learners from traditional vocational classes in order to accept or reject the idea that time spent developing APL competencies hinders development of technical skills.

The final project report of the CBAVE stated that the purpose of the project, which was to bring about the infusion of adult and post-secondary vocational education with the Adult Performance Level (APL) competency approach, was successfully accomplished.

The Performance-Based Adult Vocational Education (PAVE) Project

The PAVE project had a two-fold purpose: (1) to develop an Adult Vocational Education Competency-based* program using a research-based instructional systems design and (2) to assess the application of competency based research products being developed by the Vocational-Technical Education Consortium of States. In order to implement the first purpose, several specific objectives were devised which included designing a model to implement the competency based adult vocational education program, training instructors in developing and utilizing performance based instructional materials and methods and completing an evaluation study of the effects of using the systems design in adult vocational classes.

The model for implementing competency based adult vocational education included: (1) administrative procedures for implementing competency based programs; (2) procedures for assessing learner competencies; (3) procedures for identifying learner needs; (4) procedures for prescribing learners' activities; (5) procedures for assessing competencies acquired; and (6) procedures for certifying student competencies.

The PAVE project design was of an experimental type involving two experimental groups. The three groups are referred to as E_1, E_2, and E_3, with E_3 being the control group. Instructors in E_1 group received all materials developed by the PAVE staff as well as intensive in-service training and consultive services in developing competency based materials. Instructors assigned to E_2 group received all materials developed by the PAVE staff but did not participate in the in-service training. Minimum consultant services

*In this project, the terms competency-based and performance-based are used interchangeably.

were provided in developing teaching materials. Instructors of the E_3 group were provided a copy of the V-Tecs catalog related to their vocational area and a listing of the tasks to be taught by all instructors in the project.

This two-year project resulted in a total of 39 vocational instructors involved in the project with 26 receiving varying degrees of training related to competency based instruction. Of these instructors, ten have been identified as success models and resource persons in the further implementation of competency-based adult vocational education programs. Of the 400 adults receiving vocational training in association with the project, 300 were trained in instructional programs designed to provide competency-based instruction.

Conclusions of the project indicated that both instructors and the adult learners were very positive toward adult education in which the performance outcomes were used to measure learner success. The instructors liked the establishment of objectives prior to instruction and the performance orientation to the course. The adult learners were more receptive to a course in which the objectives were identified prior to instruction and learning experiences were performance oriented. The progress checks were also popular because of the immediate feedback provided to the learner.

It was also noted that there was no difference in the level of performance of adult learners between groups, however an analysis of the reported data indicated this may be due to two factors: (1) many of the instructors were already using methods and materials that were very little different from the competency based instructional program utilized in the project; (2) there was apparent lack of clarity or understanding on the part of many of the instructors in the procedures for conduction and reporting the pre-test. An analysis of the attitudes of the instructors indicated that instructors who

received significant in-service training and assistance were more comfortable and more positive toward implementation of the competency based instructional program while the instructors who received competency based materials but no in-service assistance were much less positive toward the program and were more uncomfortable in implementing this system.

As a result of the PAVE Project, the use of certain V-Tecs catalogs was found to be successful in Adult Vocational classes, when the instructors received appropriate in-service training in their use. The PAVE System, a systematic approach for skill training, was developed, complete with a PAVE Guide which led both the instructor and learner step by step through the process. the PAVE System, Guide, together with the V-Tecs catalogs, speaks well for the future of Adult Vocational Education by creating an effective, efficient method by which adults may learn new skills or upgrade old ones.

Summary

Both models described in this paper present a challenge to Vocational Educators to understand the needs of adults and to adjust both curriculum, content, and methods to meet these needs. While both models are different from stereotyped adult vocational programs, they are an attempt to make learning more pleasurable, efficient, and effective for adult learners. They take time, effort, and knowledge to implement but these models have proven to be a logical approach to helping adults adjust to not only expanded job needs and skills, but also develop needed coping skills in today's society.

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COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS--

A LOOK AT THREE MODELS

by

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This chapter will present three models of Competency-based High School Diploma Programs for adults. The three models presented will be the Adult Diploma Program, the Competency-based Adult High School Diploma Program, and the Adult Performance Level Competency-based High School Diploma Program developed in Massachusetts, Oregon and Texas respectively.

In a widely-recognized sense of the term, competency-based means not time-based. Progression through a "competency-based" program is based on ability (performance) and not on any time constraints. There is no minimum time a student must remain in the program. Nor is there a maximum amount of time allocated which, if exceeded, means the student has failed or is asked to leave. Clients can go through the program as quickly as they are able or take as long as they need. As the reader will see, the models described on the following pages present variations on this pure definition of "competency-based." The Massachusetts model requires all of its students to remain in its program for a minimum of "one term." A "term" is defined by the local school district implementing the program and therefore can vary between districts. The Oregon

program varies in the presence or absence of time requirements according to the local board policy of the 14 community colleges, each of which administers an Adult Diploma Program within the State Board of Education Minimum Standards for High School Diplomas. These minimum standards allow the community colleges to waive a specific time requirement if the competency required can be demonstrated, thereby meeting the pure definition of a competency-based program. All of the Texas programs adhere to the tenet that a competency-based program has no time constraints. Thus, the permutations of the three diploma programs to be presented in this chapter offer different methods of handling the question of time.

The second meaning of "competency-based," applied to these programs, relates to functional competency. Perhaps a more accurate term would be "functional competency-based diploma programs." These functional competencies include, but are not limited to, competencies of reading, writing and arithmetic. While none of the three authors will argue the importance of these competencies, we are also concerned with other competencies. We will be addressing the skills adults need in order to function effectively in their everyday lives. When we view competency in this broader context, we add the skills of problem-solving and interpersonal relations to the more traditional competencies. We also become concerned with the application of these skills to the ways in which they are used.

Latest national census data indicated approximately 55 million persons age 18 or over do not possess a high school diploma. These figures represent "out-of-school" persons and do not include high school juniors and seniors who have not yet graduated. The reasons for premature separation from school vary; however, many of the initial reasons for dropping out are the same reasons as for not returning to a conventional high school program. Lack of sufficient time due to employment, disenchantment with the conventional curriculum or rigid

structure of the high school experience, and embarrassment to return to an adolescent learning environment are significant factors for adults who wish to gain a high school diploma. For some individuals, night high schools might be an alternative. However, this option is generally found in only some of the larger cities, and even when available, they still are fettered with time requirements and based upon a conventional high school curriculum irrelevant to many adult needs and goals. The only other alternative offered dropouts has been the General Educational Development Test (GED). Experience has shown that many adult students do not regard the GED as an attractive alternative. Some feel that even with the changes made in the 1978 revision, the subject matter of the GED program is not sufficiently relevant to the daily concerns of adults. Others want to earn a regular high school diploma in preference to an equivalency certificate. Indeed, there are instances, in each of the programs at Massachusetts, Oregon, and Texas, of some students who had already earned their GED but chose to enter the diploma program. It should be noted here that in all three states an equivalency certificate is awarded upon successful completion of the GED test battery. (Note: This is not true for all states; some states offer a diploma for passing the GED.) Also, all three models award a regular high school diploma upon successful completion of their competency-based diploma programs.

Lest readers get the wrong impression, it needs to be stated that none of these three alternative programs was developed or intended to replace or displace either the GED or the conventional high school program built upon Carnegie units. The Oregon and Massachusetts models even equate some of the competencies required in their programs to the Carnegie unit requirements of their respective districts. These programs simply seek to offer a viable, flexible, relevant

alternative to those persons who want to earn a regular high school diploma based on demonstrated functional competency. The following four paragraphs point out how these flexible, relevant options are complementary to the characteristics of adult learners and grounded upon learning theory.

> Broschart notes four characteristics of adult learners: that their self-concept has shifted from dependence to self-directedness; that a reservoir of life experiences presses for integration with new learning; that readiness to learn is coincident with immediate role responsibility; and that orientation to learning is essentially pragmatic, problem-centered and related to immediate application.
>
> Two models of learning theory that complement these characteristics of adult learners are the information processing and the expectancy models of learning. The information processing model states that older learners must make sense of the new information that they are learning by relating it to what is already known, a task of organizing new input to previous experience. The expectancy model essentially posits that people learn certain things when and if that learning seems desirable to them and if they have some choice in selecting the objectives of learning.
>
> If such speculations about the characteristics of adult learners and their learning styles are credible, then the fit between the adult learners and the traditional systems of obtaining a high school diploma is obviously discrepant. Systems which emphasize learner dependency, that ignore the integration and application of subject-specific content to life experience and that disregard learner choice among possible learning alternatives would seem in opposition to learner needs.
>
> If we accept the notion that adult learners are essentially pragmatic and learn best by associating new information within the realm of their experience, then adult life skills as content makes good pedagogical sense. Given the above facts, it would seem that competency-based certification programs are much more suited to the dispositions and life styles of adult learners.[1]

The three models for awarding a credential for the demonstration of functional competence emerged from a base of common concerns, philosophy and freedom to innovate. The common concerns focused on high numbers of school dropouts and the need to expand the viable options by which these dropouts could earn a diploma. The shared philosophy behind the three programs was the belief in functional competence as a goal to be sought through a performance-based

program. A third commonality was a high degree of freedom within the local school districts desiring to pilot an innovation. The following three models will demonstrate similarities and differences in developing and implementing a competency-based high school diploma program.

--Elaine Shelton

THE MASSACHUSETTS MODEL: THE ADULT DIPLOMA PROGRAM

With millions of people not having a high school diploma but needing this document to get a job or earn a college degree, it was felt that a new method must be considered which would allow the adult to earn the high school diploma in a time frame consistent with his/her needs. This new method should also allow the student to demonstrate the learning that had been acquired since leaving high school.

With the goal of developing and implementing such a program, research on other projects or programs with these characteristics was begun in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1974. Visits or telephone calls were made to Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts. In addition, the APL Study was being completed in Texas and work was begun on analyzing the research data. Thus, after speaking with representatives from that project, it was possible to incorporate many of the concepts which were found to be significant and important for adults in terms of being functionally competent in this society. From this background research, the Adult Diploma Program in Cambridge, Massachusetts identified the general competencies of communication skills, computation skills, interpersonal relations, and problem-solving skills. (Note: For additional information on the Adult Diploma Programs in Massachusetts contact Continuing Education Institute, Inc., 19 Wiltshire Road, Brighton, Massachusetts 02135, 617/254-5012.)

The Adult Diploma Programs in Massachusetts are unique in that they are local school system endeavors. Thus, although the premises governing both programs are the same, the requirements for graduation, the life experiential methodologies, and the competency-based tests are different and reflect the local school system. In addition, it should be mentioned that the funding sources for

these programs included local school funds, CETA funds, and adult basic education funds. CETA was the predominant financing agency of the New Bedford Adult Diploma Program, while the Cambridge Adult Diploma Program was begun primarily with local school funds. Another unique feature is the fact that the idea and concept of an adult diploma program was instituted in New Bedford by a private non-profit corporation.

One of the basic ideas behind the Adult Diploma Program is that education defined in its broadest sense is not confined to a classroom or school, but occurs in many situations throughout a person's lifetime. The school system is supposed to teach the knowledge and skills a person needs in his/her life in order to prepare the student to be a happy and productive adult. This required the creation of several categories of life experiential learning for which the student could earn credit. Since the Adult Diploma Program awards a regular high school diploma, there was concern that it reflect the kinds of courses studied by students in the local high school, and that a relationship between the high school courses and the kinds of credit an adult could earn for prior learning be provided.

The main objectives of the program are basically four-fold: (1) to provide the student with the necessary basic educational skills in order to survive in this society; (2) to assist the student in establishing realistic vocational and career goals; (3) to raise the person's self-image and esteem by providing feedback and reinforcement of learning that has occurred through life experience; (4) to enable a person to earn a regular high school diploma in a time frame consistent with his or her needs and prior education.

A major part of the planning process involved making decisions concerning requirements for the diploma, the kinds of life experiential categories for which

credit may be awarded and the maximum amount of credit in each category, and the admission requirements into the program.

Massachusetts state law concerning the high school diploma requires that each student or graduate take a course in U.S. history and civics. All other requirements are left to the discretion and determination of the local school authority. In both Cambridge and New Bedford, the two cities in which the Massachusetts Adult Diploma Program has been implemented, there were just two requirements for graduation--four years of English and a specified number of credits. Thus it was decided that each student would have to take a U.S. history course; would need to earn the required number of credits; and would also have to demonstrate competencies in the communications skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. In addition, it was felt that the student should possess certain computational tools and should demonstrate knowledge of their usage.

The decision concerning the kinds of life experiential categories was very complicated. The idea of introducing non-traditional means for measuring educational achievement in a formal educational system was often difficult for the more conventional teacher and administrator initially to accept. In each case, categories were first proposed based on the belief that the skills and learning gained were similar to what might be obtained in a traditional high school course. Research was done on the kinds of life experiential categories for which credit was given in other places. Based on these findings and the high school course offerings, certain categories were suggested. These suggestions were debated and discussed by representatives from the participating schools until agreement was reached on the description of the category, the methods by which credit might be earned, and the maximum amounts of credit for each category. The exact ways in which a person might have to demonstrate such learning and the specific amounts of credit in each area were determined later by the program staff.

For these reasons, the life experiential categories differ in the two cities. Both the Cambridge School Department and the New Bedford School Department agreed to have the following categories: Employment, Military Service, Home Management, Proficiency in the Fine Arts, Proficiency in a Second Language, and Community Volunteer Experience. Cambridge has six other categories as well--Crafts and Hobbies, On-the-job Training, In-service Training, Parenthood, Travel, and Fieldwork Experience. New Bedford decided to include the following six categories: Training Programs; Sports, Recreation, and Travel; Practical Arts; Family Health and Education; and Independent Study or Project.

Since this was a local high school diploma supported by local taxes, there was concern about who might enter the program. In each city, the decision was based on different premises. Any adult resident of the city could enter the program without restrictions. The questions concerned what to do with prior residents and persons from other cities who had never lived in either Cambridge or New Bedford. In the former city, all prior residents who had attended one of the local high schools from which a record could be obtained would be admitted into the program. Other non-residents were not allowed. In New Bedford, since the program was supported by CETA funds, all CETA participants could enter irrespective of residency. Non-residents of New Bedford were allowed to enter upon the payment of a fee.

Operation of the Program

The Adult Diploma Program has eight (8) phases of operation. The following paragraphs will outline what each of these phases contains.

Phase I: Referral and Initial Application. Persons who want to enter the Adult Diploma Program must first place their names on a list to be invited to an intake/orientation session. CETA participants are referred by their employment

counselors. Persons are invited to enroll into the program in the order their names are received.

Phase II: Initial Orientation, Completion of the Application Form, Personal Interview, and Informal Contract. The initial orientation session lasts for about two hours. At the end of the session, the person is asked to complete the application blank, and to sign up for a first interview with the Diploma Consultant, the teacher/counselor with whom the student will work throughout the program. During the first interview, the two will discuss the program and will determine the areas for which credit will be sought. The student does not have to seek credit in each of the life experiential categories. At some time, an informal contract is signed by the student that indicates what will be done and by what date.

Phase III: Completion of Requirements in Communication Skills and Computation Skills. This phase includes the administration of competency tests in reading and math, and the demonstration of the ability to express oneself in written form. These tests were developed for and approved by both of the local school systems implementing the model. The reading examination is taken individually by each student. Articles for the examination were selected based on their interest to the student. Thus, for example, in New Bedford the tests include selections on local history, whaling, unemployment, insulation, Cape Verde Islands, etc. Both the Dale/Chall Readability Assessment Formula and the Fry Readability Assessment Index were used to determine the appropriate reading grade level. Comprehensive questions were designed to test the student's ability to draw inferential meaning, understand the author's main idea, follow directions, recall details, understand context vocabulary, locate antecedents, etc. The student must answer 80% of the questions correctly.

To pass the math competency requirement, a person must demonstrate an understanding and ability to perform the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and percents. This involves passing a test containing practical problems in each area. In addition, in New Bedford the student is required to answer simple practical problems involving algebra and geometry. In order to pass, the student must answer 70% of the questions correctly in each section.

Another major area involving communication skills is writing. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, there are three basic areas of written communication--social, business, and educational. Each student must demonstrate an ability in each of these areas by writing (1) a friendly letter, (2) a business letter, and (3) a composition or essay. The subject of the composition or essay is usually derived from one of the life experiential categories. In addition, in New Bedford each student is required to pass a multiple choice grammar test and a spelling test containing commonly misspelled words.

Phase IV: Attendance at Classes. If the person cannot pass one of the competency examinations in reading or math, or cannot write grammatically, he/she is referred to a class offered in the learning center or the evening high school. The teacher is informed of the areas in which the person requires assistance, and designs what might be called a tutorial program to help the student learn the necessary materials.

As has been mentioned, the Massachusetts law requires that every high school graduate have attended a course in U.S. history and civics. If the student has not taken a course, he/she must enroll in one of the local evening high schools to meet this requirement. In Cambridge, the staff has constructed an examination with proper study materials. For those adults who find it impossible to attend a course, the passing of this test allows them an important alternative in meeting the state requirement.

During the time that the student is enrolled in the program, he/she is required to attend one class or do an independent project. The class is an elective, and may be taken at any evening high school, community college, etc. The purpose is to re-introduce the student to a formal educational setting by giving him/her the opportunity to attend a class that holds special interest. The Adult Diploma Program does not offer any classes, but refers people to resources in the community.

Phase V: Demonstration of Learning Gained through Life Experience. At meetings with the Diploma Consultant, the student has determined those categories of life experiential learning in which he/she wishes to prove knowledge and competence. Decisions have also been made concerning the methods to be used to demonstrate such learning. For example, if a man is an amateur musician who plays the trumpet, he might give a performance before an audience composed of the Diploma Consultant and a music teacher from the high school. If one wants to earn credit for employment, the student would have to write an essay describing the activities on the job. At the same time, he/she would have to write a business letter to the employer asking the latter to complete a verification form indicating that the person has worked, the dates of employment, and a description of the duties.

Phase VI: Evaluation of a Student's Portfolio. The Diploma Consultant evaluates all the student's work and makes a recommendation concerning the number of credits to be awarded. The Diploma Consultant then assembles all the materials into a portfolio along with a credit schedule which outlines the person's educational activities while in the program.

Phase VII: Review of Student's Portfolio by Principal of the High School and Special Committee. The principal of the high school reviews the

student's work that is contained in the portfolio. He/she then decides whether or not the student should graduate. A special advisory committee also reviews the portfolio.

Phase III: Graduation. Once the principal approves the student's portfolio, he/she is informed by mail that all the requirements for graduation have been met. The actual graduation ceremony is held either in December or June. The time required for a student to be enrolled in the program is one term.

Results Thus Far

The Adult Diploma Program in Cambridge enrolled its first students in March 1975. Since that time, 238 men and women have graduated from the local high school. In New Bedford, the first student entered the program in December 1977. By May 1978, a total of 68 students had registered, and of this number 30 graduated on June 23, 1978 from the New Bedford High School. Thus in four years, 268 persons have earned their high school diplomas.

What has happened to these people? An evaluation was done of the students who graduated from the Cambridge program during the first year. A graduate questionnaire was mailed and a telephone survey was conducted. Of the 71 graduates, it was possible to gather information on 61. We learned that 37 persons had entered a college, community college, or other postsecondary institution, and 19 persons had new jobs. Twelve people said the job was gained because they had earned a high school diploma. All had a better feeling about themselves and their ability to learn. Almost every graduate said that he/she felt more self-confident.

Since the median age of the students was around 30 years old, most had been married at one time and had children. In New Bedford, the 107 students had a total of 192 children. Most of these children were enrolled in school in the

city. Thus, participation in the Adult Diploma Program was seen to affect the child's educational performance as well.

In reflecting on the Adult Diploma Program, one can see that its impact has been more than just personal for the individual student, but also familial and communal. Evening schools and learning centers developed new curriculum and courses to aid the student in gaining the necessary basic skills in the communication and computation areas. The Adult Education Program offered by the local school systems was altered to meet the needs of students from these programs.

THE OREGON MODEL:

THE COMPETENCY-BASED ADULT HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

Introduction

The concept of a competency-based education program in Oregon was developed to satisfy two needs:

(1) to increase the accountability of the public school educational program to the public; and

(2) to provide a relevant means of assessment of adult competencies whereby credit toward completing the requirements for an adult high school diploma could be granted for demonstrated competency.

In September 1969, the State Board of Education (SBE) in Oregon adopted a policy which gave the community colleges the authority to issue adult high school diplomas to persons over compulsory school attendance age who could demonstrate competencies required of graduating seniors from local secondary schools. In 1973, the SBE adopted a policy requiring school districts to include competencies in the new high school graduation requirements beginning with the class of 1978. (Note: For additional information on the Oregon CBHSD programs contact The State Department of Education, Salem, Oregon 97310, 503/378-3971.)

A great amount of work was done by personnel in the Oregon Department of Education, the school districts, and the community colleges to define, identify, select and assess competencies and to establish guidelines for minimum standards. Community colleges and State Department of Education personnel in charge of Adult High School Completion worked out guidelines for compliance with the State Board of Education policy. Oregon's new graduation requirements are based primarily upon the broad goal of preparing every student to function effectively in six

life roles: INDIVIDUAL, LEARNER, PRODUCER, CITIZEN, CONSUMER and FAMILY MEMBER.

The State Board of Education goals are defined in OAR 581-22-201 as follows:

> "Every student shall have the opportunity to develop to the best of his or her ability the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to function as a (an):
> (a) "'Individual'": to develop the skills necessary for achieving fulfillment as a self-directed person; to acquire the knowledge necessary for achieving and maintaining physical and mental health and to develop the capacity of coping with change through an understanding of the arts, humanities, scientific processes, and the principles involved in making moral and ethical choices;
> (b) "'Learner'": to develop the basic skills of reading, writing, computing, spelling, speaking, listening, and problem-solving; and to develop a positive attitude toward learning as a lifelong endeavor;
> (c) "'Producer'": to learn of the variety of occupations; to learn to appreciate the dignity and value of work and the mutual responsibilities of employees and employers; and to learn to identify personal talents and interests, to make appropriate career choices, and to develop career skills;
> (d) "'Citizen'": to learn to act in a responsible manner; to learn of the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the community, state, nation, and world; and to learn to understand, respect and interact with people of different cultures, generations and races;
> (e) "'Consumer'": to acquire knowledge and to develop skills in the management of personal resources necessary for meeting obligations to self, family, and society;
> (f) "'Family Member'": to learn of the rights and responsibilities of family members, and to acquire the skills and knowledge to strengthen and enjoy family life."

These life roles provide a frame of reference for mature adults and will generally be accepted by them as goals of their past and current educational efforts. Although these roles do overlap, they serve as broad categories around which to assemble a documentation of successful demonstrations of competencies for satisfaction of diploma requirements.

The specific requirements for a Competency Based Adult High School Diploma--beginning with the graduating class of 1978--are contained in OAR 581-22-226, as follows:

COMMON CORE COMPETENCIES

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAM COMPLETION

a. READ, WRITE, SPEAK, LISTEN

1. Read material from daily life comparable in difficulty to a local newspaper.
2. Demonstrate the active listening process.
3. Interpret information received from daily life visual communications.
4. Write in a manner that is correct and appropriate in a variety of life situations.

b. ANALYZE

1. Analyze and apply a decision-making process to problems related to life experiences.
2. Select and analyze a conflict situation and apply a decision-making process.
3. Analyze how the consumer's decision to buy may be affected by direct and indirect forces (propaganda).

c. COMPUTE

1. Use whole numbers, fractions, percentages, and decimals to solve life mathematical problems.
2. Apply metric and English measuring skills to life situations.

d. USE BASIC SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROCESSES

1. Analyze the impact of energy sources on personal life.
2. Explain principles of selected simple machines.
3. Interpret the effects of selected technological change on the individual.
4. Interpret the effects of selected technologies on society in the present and future.

e. DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY MIND AND BODY

1. Identify personal values and goals.
2. Identify personal emotional and physical needs.
3. Analyze and evaluate the status of physical fitness and develop a plan for its improvement and/or maintenance.
4. Explain the importance of physical activity and demonstrate skills.
5. Describe the relationship between good physical and mental health.
6. Describe basic safety measures.
7. Compare the effects of contrasting childrearing practices.
8. Demonstrate first aid practices.
9. State relation between nutrition and good health.
10. Explain the effect of common drugs on the human body.

f. BE AN INFORMED CITIZEN IN THE COMMUNITY, STATE, AND NATION

1. Identify and describe community services and facilities.
2. Identify basic legal rights and responsibilities.
3. Identify basic citizenship rights and responsibilities.
4. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the effect of historical events.
5. Function within a group.

g. BE AN INFORMED CITIZEN IN INTERACTION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Define and interpret man's responsibility in the use, conservation, and preservation of natural resources.
2. Analyze the effects of population growth upon the environment.
3. Interpret the impact of the physical environment on feelings and behavior.

h. BE AN INFORMED CITIZEN ON STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

1. Use travel related maps and schedules.
2. Identify existing local transportation facilities and services.
3. Identify responsible conduct on public roads.

i. BE AN INFORMED CONSUMER OF GOODS AND SERVICES

1. Identify, compare, and contrast services (including consumer credit).
2. Identify types of insurance for individual and family needs.
3. Plan a realistic budget based on income and needs.
4. Define and interpret payroll deductions and terminology.
5. Demonstrate the process for filing a consumer complaint regarding goods and/or services.

j. FUNCTION WITHIN A CAREER OR CONTINUE EDUCATION LEADING TO A CAREER

1. Secure and successfully hold full time employment--paid or unpaid.
-or-
2. Identify personal interests and skills.
3. Compare the various careers identified.
4. Locate and classify information about personal interests in the local community.
5. Prepare materials for job application and plan for an interview.
6. Describe the conditions which affect career adjustments and/or changes through a life time.

Description of Oregon Model

The characteristics of Oregon's competency-based high school program are discussed in these answers to the following frequently asked questions. These statements were originally prepared for a booklet available to students and others interested in the program.

Is the Program Exactly the Same in Every Community College Program? Each community college has slight variations in its diploma program. Each community college has its own Board of Directors, the same as every elementary and secondary district. This local base of authority allows latitude for variations in program objectives. These variables include admission requirements, length of "seat time" required for program completion, number of competencies and performance requirements, acceptance of credit by examination, credit for off-campus experience, amount of tuition, agreements with "feeder" high schools, and issuance of diplomas. (One of the community colleges has the feeder high school districts issue the diploma on their mutual recommendation. All the other community colleges issue the Adult High School Diploma.)

What are the Entry Requirements? The program is designed for adults (over 16 years old) who want to learn an adult high school diploma in a community college setting. One of the exceptions to Oregon's Compulsory School Attendance Law is that students who have passed their 16th birthday may attend a community college. (Most community colleges have agreements with their "feeder" high schools to require admission slips from those under 18 years old. However, the community colleges view the admission slip as an effort to maintain congenial public relations. They would not enforce this agreement if the students held firmly to their rights under the law.)

How Much Does It Cost? The Federal ABE/SAE State Grant funds are used as a tuition offset in the amount up to $220 per full-time student. This pays two-thirds of the regular full-time student tuition charge. (A full-time student is one who earns 45 quarter credits or 680 clock hours of instruction supervised actively in an approved curriculum course.) The majority of the students enrolled for high school completion attend six hours a week for a 10-week quarter or term. The tuition charged for 60 class or clock hours of instruction would vary from one institution to another, but would average out statewide at one dollar per class hour of $60. This instruction would be free to the student. The college will collect $40 from federal AE funds and will supply $20 from local tax funds to supply this tuition revenue for operating costs. The student, if he or she met course requirements, would earn six quarter hour college credits or one high school credit or both (see following section on credits and concurrent or simultaneous credit).

As represented in the above example, the total operating revenue of the Oregon community college system is derived from a combination of state funding, local taxes and student tuition. For every 45 quarter credits earned by students, the state will pay the community college $980, tuition of $360 will be charged, and local tax levy will be used to make up the balance of the $1800 per full-time student costs which is the 1977-78 average cost for the state. (Within institutions, the cost various from $1500 to $2500 per full-time student.) It would take seven students enrolled for 60 class hours per term and one enrolled for 30 class hours to add up to a full-time student earning 45 credits.

How Do I Earn Credit? Most community colleges give one-half of a high school credit for 30 class hours of instruction. This arrangement is generally accepted by secondary schools. The ratio of college quarter credits to high school credits would be six to one. All the community colleges may award credit

(high school and college) for life experience or demonstrated competencies. Each community college has its own policies in this specific area. Practices vary from enrollment of 60 class hours for each high school credit awarded by competency assessment to enrollment of the student for only the number of faculty staff hours necessary to carry out the assessment process. (A precedent for the later determination comes from an evolved practice of enrollment of a student "coming in off the street" and wanting to take the GED examination without any instruction or other survey tests for 20 class hours. This was justified by the 10 hours of test supervision and 10 hours of counseling and the paper work of reporting, etc.)

Statewide guidelines for enrollment have so far not been established. However, it is being recommended that a policy be adopted by the State Board of Education to apply uniformly throughout the state. The development of an enrollment policy will require the participation of the State Legislature, because they supply funds for about 50% of the community college operational costs.

What is Concurrent Credit, and Why Is It of Value to Me? Concurrent credit occurs when you take one class and get two kinds of credit for that one class. In this case, the two types of credit would be high school credit and college credit. You may take regular college level courses, for example, and get high school credit for those same courses. This concurrent credit arrangement allows a student to finish both high school and college at the same time.

Many students decide to take the elective credit portion of their diploma in a college, or vocational program. For example, if a student had finished most of his/her required classes but had several elective credits to earn, he/she might choose to enroll in the Food Service Program and earn all of his/her electives in this program.

What Are the Minimum Competency Requirements? Students who receive a diploma during and after the 1977-1978 school year must demonstrate a basic working knowledge of how to communicate (read, write, speak and listen), compute (basic mathematics), and analyze (problem-solve). The competencies are demonstrated by either performing a task or passing a quiz. It is possible that you may have satisfied many of these competency requirements in your previous school work, and in that case, you will only be required to prepare for and pass those competencies which you have not previously demonstrated.

How Do I Demonstrate Competency? When you feel you can demonstrate the competency, you can contact an adult education counselor and demonstrate the competency for her/him in the form of a task and/or quiz. Most high school completion classes teach material that is covered in the various competencies.

A High School Completion Competency Lab has been designed to help you build your skills in the areas where competencies are being assessed, and to actually have the competencies assessed after the learning has occurred.

How Long Does It Take to Complete the Program? Completion depends on the number of credits and competencies you currently have. The length of time is different for each individual. Only after your transcripts are evaluated will we know how long it will take for you.

How Does a Diploma Differ from GED? A diploma is granted for accumulating 21 credits in the designated areas of study. Usually you earn credit by taking classes. In addition to credits, you must demonstrate competency in areas specified by the State Board of Education.

A GED is not a diploma. It is an equivalency certificate. Although most colleges and employers accept it instead of a diploma, some may not. You do not accumulate credits with a GED. Instead, you take five exams. If you pass the exams, you receive a GED certificate.

When Can I Start High School Completion Classes? Normally classes start at the beginning of every term. Fall term starts at the end of September, Winter term starts at the beginning of January, Spring term starts at the end of March, and Summer term starts at the end of June. However, it is possible to begin your program and progress through it just as rapidly as your competency permits.

What If I Want My Diploma from My Local High School? It is possible to take some of your courses and transfer them back to your local high school for credit. If this is an option you would like to pursue, you need to contact the local high school and work out your plan of courses with the high school counselor. The local high school will determine how much credit will be granted for college classes. In this case, the college would provide the classes for you to take.

How Do I Enroll in the Adult Diploma Program? You need to bring a copy of your most recent high school transcript as well as your assessment of competencies to the Adult Learning Center. These will be evaluated so that a program can be drawn up for you.

Program Materials

Five products form the structure or framework of the Competency Based Adult High School Diploma program in Oregon. These products are:

1. an Oregon Competency Based High School Diploma Management Manual--1978;
2. a competency based diagnostic assessment procedure;
3. curriculum materials for CBAE;
4. staff development for CBAE;
5. public information about Adult Education.

Each of these components can be used independently of the others. However, they are all part of the complete program. They are all being used in

Oregon's current adult education program and are available for export at reproduction costs. A very brief outline of each product follows.

The 135-page Management Manual contains a complete plan for implementing a competency based adult high school completion program in a local school system. It defines competency, identifies the common core competencies (C^3) or performance requirements, and indexes the C^3 to subject areas. Program administration, assessment and record keeping, instruction and advising, student information, planned course statements and certification are covered in a thorough and practical way.

The assessment procedure is the keystone of the CBAE arch. It is the means by which the life experiences of an adult can be evaluated so that credit toward an adult high school diploma can be awarded for demonstrated competency. The procedure requires that the adult produce the evidence of competency at the level required for high school graduation. This is accomplished by evaluating the skills demonstrated in performing tasks. These tasks are life experience related in the areas of self awareness, travel (work/leisure), daily life and work. The assessment is designed to measure the adult's ability to function effectively in the six life roles discussed earlier. A slide-tape (15 minutes) is available explaining this component in full detail.

The curriculum materials are the products of many years of development. Since 1972, the four Northwest states have had a consortium-type cooperative involvement for AE staff training and curriculum development. One product of the consortium has been the completion of learning packages for the 65 objectives of the APL Project's five life-coping skill areas.

A comprehensive set of CBAE teacher training materials has been developed for Region X and California. This set is designed for teachers who implement

a CBAE program. Five subject areas and specific skills include: Improving Communication, Introduction to CBAE, Planning Instruction for CBAE, Instructor Competencies in CBAE, and CBAE Management. Each subject area has been developed in two ways: (1) a training workshop for small and large groups, and (2) individualized instruction modules. A slide-tape program (15 minutes in length) gives an excellent overview of these teacher training materials.

A 15-minute public information slide-tape presentation about adult education is available. It is designed to be easily adapted for any local area by simply changing six slides.

The CBAE Program in Oregon currently has very close to 20,000 adults enrolled. There are programs in 14 community colleges. About one-half the number who enroll succeed in getting a GED Certificate or an Adult High School Diploma. As programs get additional staff trained in the Life Experience Assessment Procedure, the number of adults choosing this route to a diploma is increasing at a rapid rate. More than half (5,000) the number of adults who receive a GED or an AHSD enroll for additional courses in the community colleges. Many are earning associate degrees and some continue on to four-year institutions of higher education.

THE TEXAS MODEL: THE ADULT PERFORMANCE LEVEL
COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

Background

The foundations of the Adult Performance Level (APL) Competency-based High School Diploma (CBHSD) Program were laid over seven years ago with the Adult Performance Level research project funded by the U.S. Office of Education. The APL Project staff was charged with two specific objectives. The first was to define adult literacy in terms of actual competency to perform everyday life skills. For too long, literacy had been thought of as the ability to read and write on a specified grade level. Such definitions said little, if anything, about an individual's ability to cope with the tasks encountered in daily living. In order to specify these competencies, an intensive review of related literature and research was undertaken, as was an extensive survey of state and federal agencies and foundations, particularly those which most often dealt with the minimally performing adult. A series of conferences on adult needs was also conducted in different regions of the country during which educators, private sector supervisors and personnel managers, and state and federal agency members added their insights and information to the pool. Semi-structured interviews with undereducated and underemployed persons were also conducted in order to gather firsthand data on their felt needs. (For additional information on the APL CBHSD Program, contact the APL Competency-based Diploma Program, Education Annex S 21, University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712, 512/471-4623.)

The results of these activities suggested that functional competency is a two-dimensional concept in which an identified set of skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, computation, problem-solving, and interpersonal relations) are important as they are applied to five general knowledge or

content areas (Consumer Economics, Occupational Knowledge, Health, Community Resources, and Government and Law.) The APL Project staff thus identified a set of objectives which, upon demonstration of mastery, would signify functional competency.

The second objective of the APL Project staff was to develop an assessment instrument to measure these competencies for the adult population (18-65 years of age) of the continental United States. The survey sample was randomly selected, making it possible to project results to the total U.S. adult population. The survey showed that 20% of the U.S. adults are functionally incompetent by the APL definition of the term, while less than one-half are functionally proficient.[2]

Implications of Research

To combat this alarming rate of functional illiteracy, the Adult Performance Level Project staff began to develop a curriculum based upon its tenets of functional competency in order to teach toward each of the APL objectives.[3] It was during this time of curriculum development (March of 1975) that we became aware of the External High School Diploma Program administered by the Regional Learning Service of Central New York. It was this New York program upon which the APL Competency-based Diploma Program was modeled. Naturally, since it was modeled upon the New York program, there are a number of similarities between the New York and Texas models. The closest similarity was in the Individualized Competency area, which will be discussed in a later paragraph. The most significant difference is the fact that the New York program is an assessment program to which persons come to have their functional competencies verified and recorded. The APL program, by contrast, has built in a comprehensive component to serve those large numbers of students who enter our learning centers with

less than functional proficiency. The CBHSD is a multi-faceted educational program designed to address a learner's deficiencies in order to raise his/her level of functioning to the point of demonstrable competence.

The concept of the issuance of a regular high school diploma to adults in Texas who were able to demonstrate functional competency was translated into a program in the summer of 1975. This recognized the need for continued education more relevant to adult education. It was also felt that those students should be given credit for their experiential learning through living.

CBHSD Program Process

The majority of the APL Diploma Programs are installed in already existing adult learning centers run by local school districts. Upon successful program completion a diploma is awarded from one or more of the high schools within these local districts. The CBHSD Program process from entry to exit is summarized in the following seven steps.

STEP 1: COUNSELING--The entering client is given an explanation of all available options (i.e., return to regular school classes, enrollment in night classes, the GED Program, the CBHSD Program).

STEP 2: DIAGNOSIS--If the client chooses the CBHSD Program, diagnostic testing determines skill and content area levels. Assessment findings determine the learner's placement into the APL curriculum process.

STEP 3: CURRICULUM--The curriculum addresses each of the objectives identified by the APL research. It covers the eight skill areas discussed earlier as they apply to the five APL content areas with which adults come into daily contact. Those clients not demonstrating weaknesses proceed to STEP 5.

STEP 4: MASTERY--After instruction in those content areas in which the client has demonstrated weakness, the content area measures are readministered to verify mastery.

STEP 5: LIFE SKILLS--This component is made up of tasks which are based on the APL objectives and which cover all APL content and skill areas. Each task calls for the logical use of multiple skills in the same manner that solving a "real-life" problem does. Many of the tasks call for the client to actually perform these activities in the context of real-life situations. For example, students are asked to demonstrate how to use a ballot, read a thermometer, use the Yellow Pages, read a map, apply first aid, fill out an income tax form, plan nutritious meals, prepare a resume, and comparison shop for groceries, a loan and insurance.

STEP 6: INDIVIDUALIZED COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT--Within this phase, the client has the option of choosing assessment in one of the following three categories:

(a) Occupational/Vocational--demonstrating the possession of a marketable job skill through either employer testimony, performance or a work credential such as a current state license or union card; or

(b) Postsecondary Education--demonstrating the ability to go on to a college or vocational school; or

(c) Home Management/Maintenance--demonstrating adequate skills in this area as judged by a professional in the field.

STEP 7: CERTIFICATION--On the recommendation of the CBHSD site staff and local school administrator(s), the local school board awards the regular high school diploma. This certifies that the learner has met the objective of the program--the satisfactory demonstration of functional competence.

Results

Since the program began operation in October, 1975, there have been nearly 600 graduates of the Adult Performance Level Competency-based High School Diploma Program in Texas. Twelve sites in ten school districts in Texas are offering adults 17 years of age and older this alternative route to a regular high school diploma. Several sites in other states around the country are also implementing competency-based diploma programs based upon the Texas APL model.

This program has demonstrated the flexibility necessary to assure its success under diverse circumstances and with diverse populations. One of the CBHSD Programs in Texas is being operated within an Army base, another is operating within an Air Force base, and nine of the sixteen units of the Texas State Department of Corrections are implementing the CBHSD Program for the benefit of inmates of the state's prison system. Sites have included remote rural areas as well as impacted urban settings and have also included areas of high minority concentration.

One other extremely important data source with which to evaluate the CBHSD Program's effectiveness has been a six-month follow-up survey. Tabulations have been made of the responses of the first 90 graduates to complete the surveys. Significantly, 83 of the 90 respondents had recommended the program to others and 31 of the 90 reported that they had taken educational courses following graduation. This is particularly impressive when it is recalled that 100% of these graduates had been dropouts. Graduates were also asked to respond to options as to how confident they felt before and after obtaining their diploma. Forty-eight of the 90 reported feeling "a lot more confident in myself," while 26 admitted being "more confident in myself." None of the respondents felt "less or much less confident."

It is clearly evident that the more positive self-image and increased self-confidence engendered by this diploma program are direct benefits to the students affected. Improved attitude also can be reasonably expected to benefit the community in which these adults live, since a person's attitudes generally affect how they relate to others and how they function within their environment.

ISSUES

Several issues related to the granting of competency-based high school diplomas as yet remain unresolved.

Accountability

Some persons have expressed hesitancy to award the same diploma to a person who completes a program in four months as is awarded to a person after four years of attendance. This is one of the main issues which has led some of the diploma programs to require a minimum enrollment time before the student would be eligible to receive a diploma.

Persons who raise this issue have often lost sight of the fact that what a student has to show after four years in a conventional high school program is a transcript with Carnegie units given for various subject areas. The level of achievement a student has attained is not designated, only that he/she has passed a required number of courses for which a required number of units are amassed in order to be eligible to receive a diploma. The student who goes through a competency-based diploma program, on the other hand, has a comprehensive portfolio which contains all the work the student has done while in the program. This work is documented evidence of what he/she has had to do to be eligible for the diploma, as well as exactly how well he/she has carried out the assignments. If accountability is the issue in question here, we contend that teachers and administrators can be far more accountable to the public if a portfolio containing all a student's work is available for review than if all that is available to document "successful" completion is a transcript certifying that a required number of courses were taken.

Funding

At the core of administrative acceptance and future viability of competency-based programs is the issue of funding. Some adult programs are funded on the basis of contact hours. The initial acceptance and installation of the three model programs were directly related to not having to work with or around the requirement of contact hours relating to funding level. In Texas, contact hours are not directly the base upon which funding is allocated to adult education programs. At present, contact hours are indirectly related to funding in that contact hours are used to calculate staffing needs. In Oregon, each community college has the responsibility for establishing the number of reimbursable contact hours it will submit to the Oregon Board of Education for funding by the state. For the two Massachusetts programs, funding is determined by the number of students a Diploma Consultant can adequately interact with per year.

For states which do base funding on contact hours, a strong case should be made to allow the reporting and counting of at least a portion of the hours spent in and out of "class" by students enrolled in competency-based programs. This more realistically reflects the amount of time a student spends working in the program. In at least the Texas and Massachusetts models, much of the curriculum activities and most of the Life Skills Activities can be and are accomplished outside of class.

Administrators who must justify funding level on the basis of contact hours may feel that a program which does not require a student to be enrolled a specified length of time and which allows a student to proceed through the program as quickly as he/she is able runs the risk of decreased funding. Special considerations (i.e., offering at least partial contact hour credit for work done out of class) should be given in order to equitably support the unique programmatic format of competency-based programs.

To help defray some of the costs of offering these educational programs and to effect a cooperative working relationship with other agencies, several sites are looking to CETA programs to subsidize both students and staff. With this arrangement, the adult education program works with CETA clients to bring them to the level of functional competency necessary for the competency-based diploma while they are concurrently gaining job skills. Such cooperative relationships are now in effect in five CBHSD sites in Texas and, as was mentioned earlier, in the two Adult Diploma Program sites in Massachusetts. Other potentially useful sources of financial aid for a CBHSD Program include community business, industry and labor organizations. Some of the local businesses, particularly the larger ones, may be willing and able to provide "scholarships" to the district to help defray some of the expenses.

Evaluation

Conventional evaluative methods (for example, control or comparison/experimental group designs) do not adequately evaluate whether competency-based diploma programs are indeed teaching and certifying functional competency and meeting the needs of its students, teachers, and the community. Therefore unconventional evaluative methods must be used. Evaluators must ask such questions as: (1) Is the program meeting the need for an alternative high school program for a representative sample of adults who enroll in an adult education program in order to gain a credential? (2) Are graduates of the program generally satisfied with the program? (3) Are graduates of the program using the competencies/diploma and, if so, how? (4) Is the competency-based high school diploma accepted by the community? (5) Is the competency-based diploma program replicable, adaptable for expansion, and economically feasible for mass distribution?

Demographic information gained from student enrollment forms should be a readily accessible means by which to gather information on whether diploma programs are meeting the needs of a representative sample. Much of the rest of the evaluative data can be gained through follow-up graduate questionnaires. The accumulation of answers to important questions related to the evaluation of a competency-based diploma program rests upon careful record keeping in order to keep track of the often mobile population of CBHSD graduates. Conscientious follow-up must be sought after and maintained by the program's implementers to gain this valuable information.

These three issues, among others, remain relatively unresolved after several years of implementation of competency-based diploma programs. Their lack of resolution may speak to the levels of difficulty and complexity of these issues. Perhaps the resolution to the issues would be to change the way in which we evaluate, report and fund education programs, and the evidence we look to as proof that an educational program is achieving desired ends.

There is no question that there are a number of issues which must be addressed in the future. However, the worth of a competency-based diploma program as a viable alternative should not be underestimated. Indeed, it is the stated purpose of the amended Adult Education Act to encourage the establishment of adult education programs that will

(1) enable all adults to acquire basic skills necessary to function in society;

(2) enable adults who so desire to continue their education to at least the level of completion of secondary school; and

(3) make available the means to secure training that will enable them to become more employable, productive and responsible citizens.

A competency-based adult high school appears at this time to be the only type of program which meets all three purposes of the new legislation. How states relate to the new purposes of the act will vary, but competency-based adult high school programs should be considered an important alternative to traditional means of credentialing.

References

1. Nickse, Ruth S. The External High School Diploma: Assessing and Certifying Competence in Adult Life Skills. Fearon Pitman, 1979.

2. Assessments of functional competency based upon the APL objectives are available from the American College Testing Program (ACT).

3. In the summer of 1979, the APL curriculum will be commercially published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

III. PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

THE CBAE PROCESS:

AN IMPERATIVE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Much has been expressed about change evident in our lives. It impacts us, our families and communities. We are confronted with developing conditions that present numerous and possibly confusing options for our consideration and response. We can cope with change and assist it to occur. This is possible by continuing to learn throughout our lifetime. Learning assists us to be competent in meeting the new requirements of life. Learning assists us to actualize our potential and be fully functioning in a world that is not the same world we learned about in grade school. Failure to learn may relegate us to a position of out-of-date conceptions; hence, misconceptions and incompetence. Failure to learn may enable us only to meet our past. Recognition that competence and literacy are temporary conditions subject to the corrosive elements of change will invite us to learn and grow personally and professionally.

Adult education is a response system which, when effectively employed, addresses the changing learning needs of individuals and communities. Programs provide activities which people use to learn skills necessary to be competent at performing tasks they deem important. Performing tasks at an effective level of proficiency is the condition of competence. Programs targeted toward individual competence will be responsive to changing needs and desires.

The nature of adult education presents adult educators, administrators and teachers, with demands for flexibility and responsiveness. Adult educators

must learn new tasks in order to teach the skills necessary for effective performance of those tasks. Adult educators, therefore, must be lifelong learners in order to keep pace with the changing conditions for competence.

Learning opportunities for adult educators need to be built in to comprehensive adult education systems. Professional development processes are essential for adult educators to design and implement programs which assist adult learners to become competent or maintain competence.

This article presents a rationale for adult educator professional development within the context of competency-based adult education (CBAE). It also describes a professional development model applied in Florida.

The CBAE Process

Competency-based adult education (CBAE) is the application of the general principles and concepts of competency-based education (CBE) to adult learning programs. Both CBAE and CBE have received attention in recent years. Much of the notoriety has stemmed from enthusiasm, fear and interest associated with public involvement in educational accountability. Paul Taylor notes that "Concepts of competency-based education (CBE), by no means totally new or vastly reformist in nature, are taking on savior-like roles in the latest version of the 'Johnny-can't-do-something' assault on schooling in the United States."[1] Dale Parnell noted that as of March, 1978, thirty-four states had adopted some type of competency-based education requirement.[2] Competency-based adult education programs and curriculum have been widely applied in recent years, especially since the dissemination of the Adult Performance Level research study.

Participants at the National Invitational Workshop on Adult Competency Education (New Orleans, February, 1978) developed the following definition of CBAE through a consensus process:

> Competency-Based Adult Education is a performance-based process leading to demonstrated mastery of basic and life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in society.[3]

This definition includes elements descriptive of the process of CBAE. It is an attempt to distinguish CBAE from other processes for education. CBAE may also be defined in a more general way as:

> a process to assist adults to become competent or to maintain their competence at tasks required in their environment.

This definition broadens the perspective of CBAE to include involving adults to learn skills associated with tasks that might be different or more rigorous than basic or life skills. These tasks might relate to the development of new technical skills associated with professional or technical tasks in different career areas. A specific example of this could relate to a computer operator who chooses to become competent at operating a new or different computer. In order to become competent at this task, she or he would need to acquire a new set of knowledge and skills which when applied would result in competent operation of the computer.

CBAE is a process that is based on a contract or understanding between a learning facilitator (adult educator) and the adult learner. This understanding is initiated by the recognition that the adult learner has chosen and is committed to developing competence for a certain task. The CBAE process would proceed as follows:

1. The adult educator and adult learner would mutually agree on what task(s) the learner needs to be competent to perform. This might include being able to read at some level, being able to maintain a checkbook, being able to pass the mathematics portion of the G.E.D. test, being able to conduct an effective meeting or being able to rebuild an automobile engine.

2. The adult learner would conduct an intensive and extensive analysis of the specified task and identify requisite knowledge and skills. This might include learning the names and uses of all mechanic's tools necessary to rebuild an automobile engine.

3. The adult educator would design and administer a diagnostic assessment to determine what knowledge, skills and experiences the adult learner possesses in relation to the specified task.

4. The adult educator and learner would jointly design and implement learning activities to facilitate learning of the requisite knowledge and skills.

5. The adult learner would demonstrate her or his mastery of requisite knowledge and skills as well as the specified task itself. This demonstration of competence would serve to validate the learning activities, certify the learner's capabilities and reinforce the learner's role as a lifelong learner.

CBAE has been described in complex, mechanistic terms. It has been portrayed as the vehicle for mandated accountability programs. It has been characterized with terms such as "minimum student performance standards," "minimal competency testing," "basic skills validation," "performance-based curricula," "proficiency testing" and others. It can be all these things. However, CBAE is a fundamental process for inviting adults to learn. This process has a solid foundation in adult learning theory. The process recognizes the adult as a self-directed, independent learner. Learning activities are based on the adult's experiences and skills. The CBAE program builds on the adult's readiness to learn and his or her choice to be competent at a desired task. The process also involves learners with facilitators to solve immediate problems of being competent at certain tasks. CBAE is, in fact, a process for helping adults to learn in an effective way what they want to learn. Application of this process will assist adults to use their learning skills and be more effective in future learning situations throughout their lifetime.

Professional Development Imperative

Application of the CBAE process places great demands on adult educators. These are couched primarily in the impact of change on our living circumstances.

That is, if adult education programs are truly responsive to changing conditions, then it follows that adult educators must respond accordingly.

Program changes result in changes to the professional environment of the adult educator. Hence, the adult educator must be an adult learner in order to make appropriate adjustments to change and to be competent to perform new teaching tasks in this changed environment. Professional development, therefore, has an important place in the process of program development. It is essential if programs are really congruent to the existing learning needs of adults and communities.

CBAE places demands on adult educators. It requires that they be able to assess the actual learning needs and desires of adults and involve them to clearly articulate the tasks at which they wish to be competent. The adult educator must be able to accurately determine the actual knowledge and skills that support these tasks. Since the learning needs of adults and communities change, it is imperative that adult educators continue to learn in order to stay abreast of new tasks as well as requisite knowledge and skills. The effective adult educator is a lifelong learner.

CBAE vs. CBPD

Implementation of competency-based adult education programs presents a need for competency-based professional development (CBPD) activities. This need surfaces from two vantages. One is the recognition that adult education programs must employ professional development in order to be responsive to changing learning needs evident in our communities. Secondly, it is based on a recognition that learning is enhanced by involvement and application, based on experience and modeling. Competency-based professional development is a

system to assist adult educators to recognize and respond to the new needs of adult learners. It also involves adult educators in processes generic to CBAE in order to provide a model for their future application.

Involving adult educators to recognize new learning needs of adults enables them to recognize and articulate tasks that they must perform in order to effectively facilitate learning. This recognition begins the application of CBAE to professional development. It proceeds to the identification of knowledge and skills needed by the effective adult educator. This validates the role of the adult educator and offers him or her an opportunity to make a self-assessment of his or her competence in relation to these skills and knowledge.

Professional development activities assist adult educators to recognize their learning needs, choose their learning options and reassess their competence. This is the essence of the CBAE process.

A Professional Development Model in Florida

A professional development project was facilitated by Florida Atlantic University in Florida during the three-year period ending June, 1978. This project applied a model consistent with the first three steps of the CBAE process. These included competency identification, individual assessment and designing learning activities. The project modeled involvement processes necessary for effective CBAE programs. A description of this project follows.

Background. Educational programs for adult basic and adult high school learners are provided on a broad basis throughout Florida. Programs are conducted in each county by either the public school system or the local community college. As a result, programs are administered by over sixty-seven agencies and provided by 165 schools.[4] Teachers are primarily employed on a part-time basis. During the 1976-77 school year, Florida adult education programs

employed 400 full-time instructors and 6,025 part-time instructors.[5] The numbers of agencies, program sites and teachers are indicative of the fact that Florida's programs are provided to serve learners on a broad basis.

There are advantages and disadvantages to far-reaching programs. The major advantage is that learning opportunities are accessible by larger numbers of learners. This advantage far out-shadows disadvantages including increased administrative coordination, few opportunities for teachers to collaborate with peers, and little opportunity for the development of a professional community of adult educators.

During the spring of 1975, a group of Florida adult education leaders met to outline a three-year project that would ultimately impact professional development of adult education teachers throughout Florida. A project was envisioned that would improve the level and quality of staff development activities for adult education teachers and result in improved adult education instruction. The objectives of this project were to involve adult education teachers in activities:

1. to share their ideas and reflect on those of other teachers;
2. to identify essential competencies needed by adult educators;
3. to develop and validate a self-assessment instrument based on essential adult educator competencies; and
4. to design and develop professional development activities based on essential competencies.

The project was funded beginning July, 1975 and ending June, 1978. Funds were provided through the Florida Department of Education under the provisions of section 309 of the Adult Education Act.

Project Design. In order to accomplish desired objectives, the project was designed to actively involve teachers in all aspects of project activities.

Teachers identified competencies, developed a self-assessment instrument, and developed training activities based on essential competencies. Teacher involvement was considered essential. This was based on the belief that professional development is adult education, and that adult education highly involves learners.

The process designed for the project was based on the following assumptions:

1. adult education teachers can identify competencies needed by adult education teachers;
2. adult education teachers are invited to reflect on their competence as an adult educator when they consider competencies essential for adult educators;
3. adult education teachers can design and develop professional development learning activities based on essential competencies;
4. involvement in project activities will invite adult educators to interact as a professional community;
5. involvement of administrators and teachers to collectively plan, conduct and evaluate project activities will enhance the level of quality of future activities;
6. adult education teachers will apply techniques employed during project activities to their teaching situations; and
7. involvement is valuable.

The project was designed in three phases. These were:

Phase I	(1975-76)	Competency identification and classification
Phase II	(1976-77)	Validation of competencies and development of a self-assessment inventory
Phase III	(1977-78)	Development of professional learning activities and a training guide

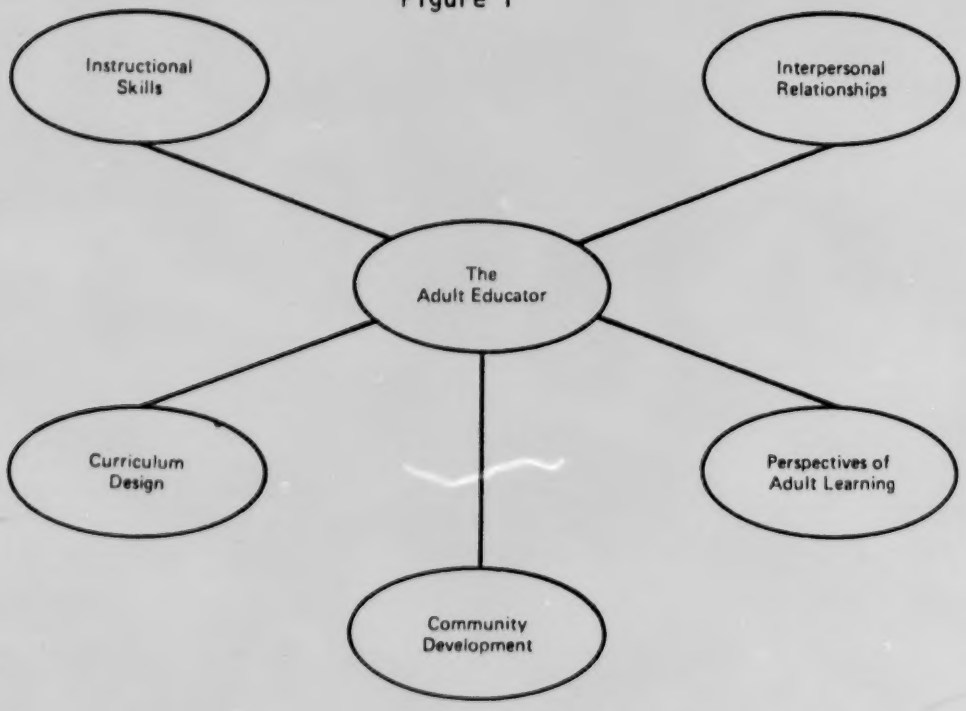
Competency Identification. During the 1975-76 fiscal year, project activities were implemented. The major objective of these activities was to identify and classify a list of competencies considered essential for adult

educators. Secondary objectives were to: (1) involve administrators in planning for activities; (2) develop a preliminary self-assessment instrument; (3) review existing training materials in relation to a preliminary list of competencies; and (4) gain field acceptance of the project.

Initial project activities were implemented in three Florida school districts. Sixty teachers were involved in a series of six workshops and four writing sessions. Teachers reviewed the Florida Catalog of Teacher Competencies and several research sources relating to adult educator competencies.[6]

In order to identify competencies relating to adult educators, teachers were involved in small group problem-solving sessions. They prepared a preliminary list of eighty-eight competencies and classified these in five areas including adult learning, community development, curriculum design, instructional skills, and interpersonal relationships (see Figure 1).[7] This list later served as the basis for validation activities.

Figure 1



Teacher involvement yielded a high level of communication between schools, individuals and school districts. Further, it was believed that teacher involvement in workshop planning, implementation and evaluation ultimately impacted classrooms in the form of a high level of teacher-facilitated student involvement.

Validation of Competencies. During the second project (1976-77), project activities were expanded to include adult teachers in eight Florida school districts. The major objectives of activities were to validate competencies and field-test a self-assessment instrument based on the final competencies. Activities were also designed to continue to involve program administrators with teachers to design project workshops.

Alternative methods of validating competency statements were considered. An interview process was selected since it permitted the active involvement of adult education teachers. This process basically included (1) inviting teachers to reflect on the appropriateness and importance of each competence, and (2) asking them to review the competencies for clarity and structure. Ninety teachers participated in the validation process that yielded sixty-nine competencies classified in five areas. Each area included two key competencies.[8] (A list of the final list of competencies is included as an Appendix to this article.)

Self-Assessment Inventory. Self-assessment is considered a valuable means to invite the individuals to learn. The project permitted teachers to develop a self-assessment instrument entitled Adult Education Self-Assessment Inventory.[9] It included one item for each of the sixty-nine competencies. The self-assessment instrument was field-tested on a test and re-test basis to determine the reliability of each item. Two hundred sixty-three teachers in fourteen Florida school districts participated in the field-testing.

Learning Activities and Training Guide. The third and final phase of the project was conducted during the 1977-78 fiscal year. It focused on the development and publication of learning activities based on adult educator competencies. In addition, a group of adult education teachers were trained as workshop facilitators to demonstrate professional development processes.

Teachers in five Florida school districts were involved in a series of ten teacher-facilitated workshops to develop learning activities and a guide entitled Alternatives for Staff Development of Adult Educators. The training guide was designed based on key adult educator competencies. These included:

1. Assess staff learning needs.
2. Develop goals and objectives.
3. Organize the teacher training curriculum.
4. Develop conditions that facilitate learning.
5. Develop effective working relationships with teachers.
6. Use effective instructional methods.
7. Recognize participant contributions.
8. Assist individual adjustment to change.
9. Understand the purposes of adult education in the community.
10. Demonstrate a commitment to life-long learning.

Project Results. The project was successful in meeting each of the intended objectives. It enhanced involvement of adult education teachers to examine their tasks as adult educators. Further, the project demonstrated a model for elements of the CBAE process. This model included identifying competencies relating to a particular task, providing for self-assessment, designing learning activities and actively involving learners. This model provides an experience base for teachers to apply in their classrooms.

Summary

Competency-based adult education is a process for adult education programs to effectively respond to learning needs evident in our communities. It also provides a means for programs to be individualized as well as community-based. These are accomplished through involvement of community members, learners and adult educators in the design and conduct of adult learning programs. Involvement is a means to both promote change and recognize change.

The dynamic nature of adult programs demands appropriate staff responses. These can be facilitated through professional development activities. The adult educator, therefore, updates her or his skills on an ongoing basis. This enables them to be competent at new tasks facing them. The effective adult educator is a lifelong learner. CBAE is most effective when implemented for lifelong learners by lifelong learners.

Appendix

ADULT EDUCATOR COMPETENCIES

Adult Learning

Develop conditions which facilitate learning.
- Provide a suitable learning environment.
- Reinforce positive attitudes toward adult learning.
- Assist adult learners to develop positive attitudes toward lifelong learning.
- Relate learning to immediate application.
- Recognize signs of the potential adult dropout.

Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning.
- Participate in adult education staff development programs.
- Read professional literature.
- Enroll in college courses for professional growth.
- Attend conventions and conferences relevant to professional growth.
- Participate actively in professional adult education organizations.

Community Development

Understand the purposes of adult education within the community.
- Understand the role of an adult educator.
- Understand the national and state objectives and services of adult education.
- Explain the role of adult education to both school and community.
- Talk and act enthusiastically about the program.
- Identify the major functions of community agencies which serve the social, educational and training needs of adult learners.
- Know the social structure and characteristics of the community.
- Use community resources in the classroom.

Assist individual adjustment to the changing nature of our society.
- Invite learners to consider new roles in a changing society.
- Use social skills which assist adult learners in developing a positive self-concept.
- Assist adult learners in acquiring social skills to relate to others.
- Recognize processes involved in community change.

Curriculum Design

Develop and organize curriculum reflecting needs of adult learners.
- Provide curriculum for varying ability levels.
- Identify needed topics and concepts of each subject taught.
- Provide curriculum which meets the individual's personal interests.
- Provide curriculum which assists adult learners to acquire employment skills.
- Provide curriculum which stimulates a high level of aspiration.

Provide opportunities for adult learners to participate in the evaluation of curriculum.
Provide opportunities for adult learners to participate in curriculum development.
Relate adult developmental characteristics (sociological, psychological) to curriculum selection.

Develop appropriate goals and objectives for adult programs.
Help adults formulate their goals.
Construct learning objectives with measurable outcomes.
Apply adult learning theory to the process of program development.

Instructional Skills

Assess learning needs.
Diagnose entry knowledge and skill of adult learners for a given set of instructional objectives.
Use performance-based assessment procedures.
Provide for learner self-evaluation.
Recognize symptoms of physical deficiencies that may hinder performance.
Provide continuous feedback to learners on their education progress.
Keep records of class and individual progress.

Use relevant and effective instructional methods.
Communicate in a coherent and logical manner.
Use sequential, relevant short-range instructional objectives.
Assist adult learners in development of problem-solving skills.
Apply instructional techniques which use the talents, abilities and experience of group members.
Assist adults in the development and use of learning skills.
Provide practical activities for learning.
Adjust instructional techniques to meet immediate learning needs.
Promote self-directed learning.

Interpersonal Relationships

Develop effective working relationships with adult learners.
Establish a basis for mutual respect for adult learners.
Interact constructively with adults (approachable, friendly, responsive and supportive).
Use reinforcement techniques.
Apply principles of group dynamics.
Respond positively to constructive criticism by making appropriate changes.
Observe adult learners expressing their ideas freely.

Exhibit behavior reflecting a feeling for the dignity and worth of individuals.
Accept comments of adult learners with a positive attitude.
Solicit comments and expressions of adult learners.
Relate effectively to people from a variety of cultural, economic and occupational backgrounds.
Assist in developing positive self-concepts by designing "success" opportunities for each learner.
Encourage the learner's growth through supportive communication.

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ADMINISTRATION ISSUES FROM THE CBAE PERSPECTIVE

by

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The development of the Competency-Based Adult Education (CBAE) movement may be viewed from a perspective not unlike the chicken-or-the-egg argument. For our purpose, let's consider the Statement of Purpose of the Amendments to the Adult Education Act which in part calls for expansion of educational opportunities for adults and the provision "of programs of adult education that will enable all adults to acquire basic skills necessary to function in society." As we see it, a program-process or an intent-practice chicken-or-egg situation comes to mind. Chicken advocates are those who would modify the existing structure of the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program and intent; that is, to integrate a CBAE model or whatever into the on-going activities. On the other hand, egg believers see CBAE as a process which develops into an ABE program. A bit too simple perhaps, but whatever the differences between CBAE as a program or process, the concerns over the total effort should be considered both philosophically and realistically by the administrators on all levels who will eventually create the conditions under which learning can take place.

A great deal of attention is being given to CBAE efforts nationally. Major activities in the past such as the Adult Performance Level (APL) study and the subsequent critical analyses; the strong movement towards minimum competency testing in the K-12 area; at least three national CBAE conference/ workshops, and the already mentioned Statement of Purpose of the federal

legislation all contribute to keeping the topic current. The purpose of this paper is to examine briefly the delivery of CBAE. Emphasis will be placed on the administration of the ABE programs in the public schools which are designed to serve "undereducated" or "functionally illiterate" learners. Our approach will be broad based and conceptual; touching on selected general aspects of educational administration and Competency-Based Adult Education.

Administration

Educational administration, according to Owens "a profession of recent vintage," is an awesome area to approach given limited space and time. Writers face the problem of presenting a caricature rather than a picture, and readers, no doubt, have more than ample supplies of literature to combat and refute even the caricature which may be presented. Attempting to narrow the coverage also has faults. Chief among them are the "new" directions and, as Owens claims, "revolution" and "new ferment" in educational administration, which have roots in the mid-1960's. However overpowering the volume and scope of the literature in this field grows and changes, administration of adult education and particularly the ABE programs, at least up to now, seems to have remained relatively constant. We believe that a genuine CBAE approach will, out of necessity, bring change.

We will be concerning ourselves with public school administrators. This is done for two reasons. First, public school systems, unlike most other educational organizations, require that their administrators be state certified. This is a formalized procedure involving the evaluation of college/university transcripts, a required number of years of teaching, and often an internship experience. If certification is granted, a license to do whatever it is that

administrators do or are supposed to do is issued by the state's education department. The second point is that the administration of CBAE systems is, for the most part, a public school sponsored or perceived role. Created as a result is a possible condition where routinized and standardized administrative theory and practice may be applied to a relatively new and certainly more flexible learning program or process. This is especially true for the federally authorized and funded ABE programs which we will be discussing further on in this analysis. First, however, it is important to at least tiptoe over some perspectives on educational administration in general.

Luther Gulick, writing over forty years ago, made a statement that has more than a ring of truth today. "Probably the most widely known administrative taxonomy," he wrote, "is POSDCORB which, when developed, was thought to be the ultimate in administrative thought." POSDCORB is a "word" made up by Gulick to call attention to the "various functional elements of the work of the chief executive: Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Co-ordinating, Reporting, and Budgeting." Stop reading this article now and pick up even the most up-to-date work in educational administration. Regardless of the "now" terms you may find attached to these elements, POSDCORB is alive and well. If you require further evidence, review some of the recent job descriptions for public school administrators. Better yet, check a college catalog for the titles of educational administration courses.

The purpose here is not to browbeat educational administration. That field has enough of its own quarrels. Nevertheless, Walton seems to explain the apparent problem best of all.

> The subject matter of educational administration is not a thing of intellectual beauty. Borrowing fragments from several disciplines--law, political science, social psychology, sociology, economics, business, education, engineering, architecture, and statistics--it

> lacks a well-defined, highly organized body of subject matter; it has no elegant and simple theoretical structure; and as literature it is singularly devoid of aesthetic qualities. In addition to the fragments appropriated from other disciplines, the content of the courses in administration has consisted of a description of practices, the cautious recommendation of promising techniques, personal success stories, and lively anecdotes, all surrounded with the aura of common sense, and often purveyed by a more or less successful administrator. However helpful this approach has been to the prospective administrator, it has not done much for the development of the subject.

The "development of the subject" is handled extremely well by a number of persons. Rather than develop an extensive literature review at this juncture, attention is directed to the work of Daniel Griffiths, Robert Owens, and Thomas Sergiovanni and Robert Staratt for their reviews of administrative development and theory.

We haven't come to bury or to praise Caesar. Educational administration continues to be in transition as the role of educator as manager is reconciled with contemporary organizing of schools as social systems. This condition is exacerbated as the cyclical criticism of public school education seems to be peaking on the minimal competency testing (viz. accountability) issue. Griffiths' comments: "Theoretical work in administration outside the field of education has been productive of a much larger quantity of theories than has education." Faced with a veritable maze of theory, or lack thereof, and the degree of "flexibility" in the state certification of administrators, an almost classical preparation versus performance dichotomy persists. Certain elements or factors in the administration of adult education programs in public schools present their own problems.

Administration of Adult Education

There is a prima facie difference between educational activities designed and conducted for youth and adolescents and adult education programming. The major points of departure are listed below.

--learners participate on a non-compulsory basis

--formal, or minimally informal assessment of "needs" is a programmatic necessity

--a marketing of "customer-business" relationship exists between learner and activity

--a sense of learner-instructor "equality" or equalness exists

--non-authoritarian methods and strategies must be used

--the learners' use and needs for "new" knowledge or learning is manifest

--a more flexible response to change is required of the program

--there is a predilection to experimentation

--use is made of the life experiences of the learners

These characteristics of adult education may find themselves, at times, in varying degrees of conflict with the philosophy-operation of the public school system in which the program exists. The size of the program, its role in the system's plan and the administration of adult education in a public school are, therefore, crucial variables to the success of the endeavor.

William Spady, of whom we will hear more, looks at school organization and systems as a sociologist. One of his concerns is with the orientation of the school toward either a "maintenance" or "productivity" mode; that is, an administration which manages schools (programs) or manages learning (products-outcomes). According to Batten, "all agencies have a choice between using either directive or non-directive in working with people." Much of the negative feelings toward "school" may be traced to how a particular system is perceived in this vein. The directive approach, which is almost diametrically opposed to adult education philosophy, considers schools as institutions built on the axiom that learning results from teaching. "They assume that students cannot or should not be trusted to pursue their own interests. Knowledge is viewed as the accumulation of layer upon layer of content and information, a

fixation which encourages teachers to structure curricular offerings into neat little 'boxes' with fixed content, procedures and evaluation criteria. The essence of the directive approach," says Batten, "is the program itself." In short it is typical of the maintenance orientation. Batten's description of the non-directive approach holds that persons "who adopt this approach no longer try to lead or persuade. Instead, they stimulate people to think about their needs, feed in information about possible ways of meeting them, and encourage people to decide for themselves what they will do. The non-directive worker strives to stimulate a process of self-determination and self-help, and the person values it for all the potential learning experiences which participation in this process provides." Adult education, and CBAE in particular, may survive because they are both aligned with the more non-directive philosophy.

Knowles lists some characteristics of static versus innovative organizations. The dimensions are: "structure, atmosphere, management philosophy and attitudes, decision making and policy making and communications." He gets more personal: "My observation of adult education programs in all kinds of institutions across the country supports the generalization that there is a direct connection between the strength of a program (as measured by size, vitality, quality of output, and support from the system) and its status in the policy-making structure." An interesting note is added by Dr. Knowles. It is his observation "that the administrators of the really effective adult education programs in institutions of all sorts across the country stand out as being different from the general run of administrative personnel."

Keying on Knowles' perceived difference in adult education administrators is important, especially in terms of a program's size. This datum is accompanied by a host of tangible factors. For, even though the POSDCORB is

basically the same regardless of size, this variable often determines the level of administration laid on; that is, assistant superintendent, principal, director, coordinator or teacher-in-charge to name a few. Credentialing them may become a question. Small programs with part-time administrators often are not required to have that person meet the state certification requirements: larger, usually more urban program administrators must. Size may also have an impact on the capacity of the program to function in a manner most consistent with non-directive, productive, and innovative style. Adult educators are different. In a way, they are educational barnstormers able to manipulate the ins and outs of systems to accomplish goals. And, they will have to do just that.

Nowhere does there seem to be more change in the wind than in the federally authorized Adult Basic Education program. With a revised statement of purpose directed toward programs of functional literacy, a requirement for participatory planning in the development of the state plan, and the expansion of services to include community-based organizations, all that is known or believed about administration and systems is on the table. The theory or mixture of educational administration theories held by persons in commanding or leadership roles will, no doubt, be reflected in how each situation or problem is faced. We will be looking at a potential problem area: the adult basic and secondary program delivery and administration of competency-based adult education.

Competency-Based Adult Education (CBAE)

Competency-based adult education is a performance-based process leading to the demonstrated mastery of basic and life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in society. This meaning, developed at the Office of

Education Invitational Workshop on Adult Competency Education in February 1978, is important for a number of reasons: it is field-based; the concept of process is used in place of program; basic and life skills mastery are goals; the intent is that content be necessary for the individual; and that participation in society is central. It is also an important definition to keep in mind in terms of the developing practices of minimal competency testing in the public schools. Minimal competency testing is not competency-based education. The former is concerned with outcomes regardless of process; the latter is methodological, based on many factors not the least of which being the clientele being served.

In the Adult Basic Education program, almost half of the classes are held in elementary, junior and senior high school buildings. Table 1 depicts the data.

Table 1

Number of Daytime and Evening Classes in Adult Basic and Secondary Education Program by Type of Facility Housing

	FY 1974	FY 1975	FY 1976
Total number =	62,265	93,952	93,877
School building			
Elem/Jr High =	15,985	16,520	13,417
Secondary =	13,599	24,719	30,813
Percentage of classes in school buildings =	.48	.44	.47

Other class locations are in colleges or technical institutions, learning centers (not clearly defined because they could also be located in school buildings), correctional institutions, hospitals, work sites, and in other

locations not mentioned as a specific category. Public school facilities are then the largest single type of location for ABE classes. The administration of competency-based education in ABE situations, given the existing environmental and role factors discussed, takes on some interesting dimensions.

CBAE is neither new nor foreign to many educators. Persons in vocational education and teachers of English as a second language have been dealing with the mastery of behaviors as well as performance-based instruction-learning for many years. Many of the recreational and avocational programs and activities are based upon the demonstrated mastery of specific skills and/or knowledge: dance, arts, and crafts to name a few. The application of CBAE to adult basic and secondary completion programs, while also not really a startling new concept, has now been legitimized by the Education Amendments of 1978. What we are talking about, basically, is the delivery of skills and knowledge in a manner more flexible and consistent with adult characteristics and learning needs related to functioning in society, pursuing a secondary completion (if desired) and/or benefiting from an occupational or vocational training program.

Let's now try to parlay a few ideas in order to frame CBAE administration in the adult programs of basic and secondary education in public school system structures. Clark, in describing interorganizational patterns in education, discusses the traditional theory of bureaucracy and associated conceptions of administrative behaviors. The economic, demographic, and political trends which surround the school create problems which, says Clark, must be responded to, in some cases, by altering the structure. "Such programs," as the federal ABE program may be typical of, "must be effected through the existing educational structure by changing that structure or bypassing it." The Education Amendments of 1978, Title XIII, Part A, the Adult Education Act, enables this "bypassing" of the public school structure with possible/probable

changes in that system as a result. Structure and change will be the two major characteristics affecting CBAE in the basic and secondary education programs authorized by the Congress.

Ingham's insightful work on administrative processes in adult education, taken from a structural point of view, states that a "principle about administrative behavior in adult education may be valid for the adult education in one type of organization, but not valid for the adult education unit in a different type of organization. Thus, the statement of a principle," he continues, "must be qualified in terms of the type of organization to which it applies." In studying Etzioni's Compliance-Structure Model, Ingham states that "the compliance structure of the adult education unit itself in the public school is mixed, depending on the type of program in which the student is enrolled." CBAE, while perhaps not a radical departure from what has been unreportedly happening in ABE classes and programs (viz. teaching to life skills competencies and reporting grade levels), does represent change. Spady, speaking of the system in general, says that "a real competency program really turns the school on its head. . .it really changes fundamentally all kinds of ways we organize and structure what we do." The fly in the ointment here is well stated by William Griffith: "Because the adult program has tended to be a financially insignificant part of the school district budgets and because the programs have been run primarily by part-time directors, adult education remains a minor concern of school administrators." This seems especially true of adult education for basic and secondary completion programs. If you don't agree, consider what would most probably happen to ABE in public schools if the federal funds were no longer available.

Griffith also discusses the evolving role of the adult education director in terms of functions, characteristics, and the "model of an ideal program which can be inferred from the descriptions." Wells and Ulmer direct their attention to the administration of programs specifically for disadvantaged adults. So, we have Gulick's POSDCORB, Knowles' and others' personal observations, some research and analysis, and much criticism. The latter is of special interest relative to our discussion of ABE administration in the public schools as a more competency-based approach is being emphasized by the functional literacy purpose of the Adult Education Act.

Then we have Mezirow taking a more professorial than "professional" look at ABE. Highly critical of ABE administrators and others, he is "more alarmed by the andragogical illiteracy rife among educators charged with ABE than by the magnitude of the need for ABE in this country." He claims that "most administrators--even of major programs--have never attended any instructional session of adult learning or education and know very little about the field. They are," he continues, "simply schoolmen temporarily assigned to shape up a new program." If nothing else, Mezirow's views are certain to be discussed and much quoted. They should provide a real reawakening of thought. Because, if, as he claims, "we have no solid core of adult educators able in helping adults become self-directed learners, increasingly able to define their own learning needs and to plan, conduct and evaluate their own learning experiences," then now is a more than appropriate time to do something about it.

Administration, Adult Education and CBAE

The time may be coming, and sooner than later, when adult education is able in a very significant way to affect the structure and functioning of the system in which it operates. Educational administration, as the theories

proliferate and the "schoolmen" attempt to deal more effectively with change and the social elements which surround the system, may provide for an innovative climate unparalleled since Sputnik. The "expansion" of services mandated by the Adult Education Act, and the opportunities provided for a more competency-based approach to ABE complement these times. A bridge, so to speak, between CBAE and K-12 may, if done properly, be built as states develop requirements for minimum competence as an outcome from school.

Consider a genuine competency-based, basic education process coupled with a competency-based adult high school completion program. Now, think of this arrangement functioning in a solidly (i.e., directive, maintenance oriented) traditional public school system. Given that adult education is a "minor concern of school administrators"; is very often a casualty at budget cutting times, and is relatively left free to pursue its own course, this senario is not too far fetched. While the basic POSDCORB remains relatively the same for both processes, the outcomes and, we suspect, the administrative character would differ substantially. Someone, at some time, is going to look at the outcomes of the processes and begin to ask questions.

The administration of basic and life skill CBAE, as opposed to the more standard or traditional educational processes, will be affected by many things: recalling Knowles, "size, vitality, quality of output, and support from the system." Other factors may be considered in developing the structure, organization, and eventual administration theory and practice of CBAE in public schools: innovation/change; achievement of goals; organizational hierarchy; administrative roles; leadership; organizational control; community relationships; and clientele.

At the heart of the issue are theories and processes of interaction which will either enable and encourage or inhibit and block change. Change can

be, and more often than not, is threatening: especially in a bureaucracy. In this environment, school administrators are being forced to deal with the hard questions about their institutional goals and outcomes. For example, consider the case of the young recipient of a high school diploma, unable to get a job and lacking functional literacy skills, who sued his school system for negligence. As Spady points out, accountability and the need for good performance data are pressing demands resulting in, what can be called, an undermining of "time/role" based systems giving way to "outcome/goal" models.

Finally, there is the reality of "the structure of influence and control" which Clark calls "the one major line of adjustment (to social, economic, and political forces) in the over-all educational system." The administration of CBAE should force us to look closely at the factors surrounding the administrative-organizational hierarchy and roles, and the intangible elements of leadership which result. In this regard, Weber's three types of authority (traditional, charismatic and legal), and Peabody's categories (legitimacy, position, competence, and person) present fine sets of concepts to examine further.

When all is said and done, one factor, often forgotten in the rush of things, stands out above the rest. In our instance, it is the adult as the learner. Burton Clark, writing over twenty years ago, said it best: "The relationship of the adult school organization to its clientele approaches that of the customer-business relationship in which the customer is usually right. The customer can come or go." It is our contention that administration which is able and willing to respond to the learner and be consistent with CBAE philosophy can provide the more realistic learner-centered "business" condition.

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IV. RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT

THE CURRENT STATUS OF CBAE RESEARCH

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In adult education Competency Based Education (CBE) is frequently equated with life coping skills instruction and/or programs which award secondary certification for demonstrated performance. Thus, the term is applied to many different kinds of efforts and contexts, some of which comply to a greater extent than others with a definition of CBE.

For the purpose of this chapter, Competency Based Adult Education is defined as an educational process which has as its goal the development of ability to perform known and agreed upon outcomes. Completion of the process is based on student demonstration of those outcomes rather than on time. This definition draws heavily from that of Spady; in a further agreement with Spady's perspective, CBAE refers to ability to function in life roles.[1] Implementation of a CBAE program includes: 1) a precise statement of outcomes as competencies and criteria for demonstrating competencies; 2) alternative provisions for learning that are directly related to the outcome; 3) performance based determinations of competence; 4) responsiveness to student needs and life situations.

Research related to the CBAE movement has concentrated on identifying and measuring competencies. Though some data regarding the effects of instructional programs have been collected, they rarely fit the rigid parameters of carefully controlled quantitative research designs. In examining the data it is clear that most of them are derived from programs which have implemented one or more facets of CBAE rather than a total process. In some instances the sole facet is the provision of instruction related to life roles within a basic skills program.

The Competencies

Determining competencies necessary to social functioning is a difficult and complex task. Researchers are faced with the problems of determining how to find out what the competencies are and which are really necessary. Performance levels which are a valid indication of successful life functioning must then be determined.

The most influential study in CBAE is the Adult Performance Level Study (APL).[2] Funded in 1971 to specify the functional competencies related to economic and educational success in today's society and to develop devices for assessing those competencies, the APL research produced both a set of competency objectives and test items. Procedures used to develop the competency objectives included a literature search, a survey of state and federal agencies and foundations, regional conferences on adult needs and interviews with undereducated and underemployed persons. The objectives developed have since been used by other researchers, curricula developers and publishers, while the test items have been turned over to the American College Testing Program (ACT).

Perhaps the major contribution of the APL study is its concept of competency as the integration of skills and knowledge rather than as a set of isolated skills or bits of information. The development of competency statements within a matrix of five knowledge areas intersecting with the basic skills of communication, computation, problem solving and interpersonal relations defines competency as more than ability to read, compute, or write; it is the ability to apply and synthesize relevant skills and information toward a more encompassing goal.

While many adult educators accept the APL list unquestionably, others are concerned about its inclusiveness and applicability to specific populations.

Some question the procedures used to identify competencies. Many of the validation studies have been undertaken as a first step in APL curricula development for states or individual programs. These studies primarily assess responsiveness to statements based on the APL objectives and include only students and/or staff in ABE programs. As such, the results indicate perceptions of need or interest of those groups. While receptivity to certain topics of functional instruction is indicated, receptivity to a CBE model may still be questioned.

Studies conducted in New Jersey, Region X, Pennsylvania, the Southeast, and Alaska,[3] as well as in a number of cities and towns, are of this type. Though there are variations in the specific procedures and the range of competencies used for collecting the data, the common model is to develop a list of statements based on the APL objectives or steps subsumed under each objective, to devise a system of response, and then assess the reaction of students and possibly staff to the need or interest for each statement. In some cases the APL or a basic skills test is also administered to students to determine the relationship between perceived necessity and ability.

Self perceptual methods have limited usefulness for validating that certain competencies are generally necessary to function successfully in this society. A respondent may not deem a competency or skill necessary because she/he already is satisfied with current capability (e.g., already has a driver's license), has not yet encountered the need (e.g., obtaining credit), or developed beyond the need (e.g., birth control).

Such studies are useful in fulfilling their purpose for making curricula decisions. The results, however, are appropriate only to students already enrolled in ABE programs; those students who, by and large, enter programs

anticipating and receiving basic skills, ESL or GED instruction. It is therefore not surprising that learning the basic skills is rated as a higher priority than life skills by respondents in these studies. Since students are receptive to learning life skills so long as that instruction is related to their initial perception of the program's purpose, attempts are made to integrate life applications into the basic skills sequence. While practical, given the current status of ABE/GED programs and certification routes for adults, this approach dilutes the emphasis on sequential development and synthesis of skills inherent in CBE.

Other researchers have taken different approaches to identifying the competencies necessary for successful social functioning. Adkins used a counseling interview technique to collect information regarding the psychological and social living needs of 258 enrolled and potential ABE participants in Connecticut. Qualitative analysis of the statement resulted in seven problem clusters:

Occupational and career problems

Problems in living in the community

Problems of personal growth and development

Problems in relating to others

Medical and health problems

Marriage and family problems

Problems of being a parent

Each cluster is further divided into subproblem areas.[4]

A project to identify the values, knowledge and skills necessary to be a competent economic manager of family resources was completed in Utah. A unique aspect of this study was the attempt to categorize competencies according to life-cycle and life-style stages. The resultant list of competencies was

derived from a literature search which included an examination of data on expenditure patterns from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and information from the Utah Division of Consumer Affairs to identify prominent consumer frauds, as well as information on life stages. The demographic and cultural uniqueness of Utah residents was considered in selecting the final list of consumer competencies. The researchers noted the limitations of available data and their applicability to Utahans, which necessitated conclusions based on researcher judgment.[5]

In California a study to determine necessary functional competencies and to assess the needs of adults in that state is currently underway. A preliminary survey of 47 federal, state and local government agencies had indicated that while many of the knowledges, skills and tasks in APL were perceived as necessary by representatives of these agencies, there were others considered missing or underemphasized. Statements were often specific to an agency concern, i.e., those involved with the elderly thought it vital for the aged to know how to secure their discounts and entitlements. The need to develop attitudes, such as a positive attitude toward preventive health care, was also frequently stated.

To identify competencies needed in California, an extensive literature review was undertaken. From this literature review a list of general competencies was generated and organized into a conceptual framework. Specific statements for each general competency were developed by a panel of experts, then extensively reviewed, rewritten and edited. This process resulted in the following five categories: Cultural, Economic, Health and Safety, Interpersonal and Social-Political. Each category is further divided into subcategories with specific competency statements for each subcategory.[6]

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education at Ohio State University is currently conducting a study to identify necessary competencies in Occupational Knowledge and Consumer Economics. The initial draft of competency statements was developed after a review of those produced by others. These were then rated by experts. Further input into the final listing will include field ratings by random samplings of adults, twelfth graders, employers, and K-12 teachers. Respondents will be asked where competencies should be learned and how important each competency is.[7]

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratories is endeavoring to characterize the situation-specific uses of literacy skills of people in local communities. Literacy requirements can then be related to an individual's roles and life activities. Techniques for assessing literacy in specific settings will also be developed. The conceptual framework and research methods employed in this project will be useful to others seeking to determine the literacy needs of adults in other locations.[8]

Examination of the various efforts to identify necessary competencies indicates that there are some commonalities in the general categories. The major addition to the five APL knowledge and basic skills areas is a cultural component. Community Resources generally receives a low priority in ABE program related studies and is usually not singled out as a separate component in other studies. For the most part, though, the differences in various lists are in titles, emphasis, and organization. Many of the same tasks or aspects of competency are common to several lists, though their placement within the lists varies. This similarity is partially due to the influence of the APL research on later efforts.

Because the different studies sought to identify competencies from different perspectives, the concept of necessity has been applied to external,

social or community necessity as well as to individual or subgroup need. Procedures used in the different studies include:

1. asking people what they need to know or are interested in learning;
2. asking people to respond to a list of pre-specified competencies;
3. collecting literature and information from a variety of sources;
4. asking experts or providers of services to adults to indicate what adults generally, or clients of a service, need to be able to do;
5. analyzing what people do in relationship to performing certain roles or activities;
6. administering tests to determine areas of weakness.

The results of the various studies highlight the fact that a specific competency is rarely applicable to all people. Geographic location, sex, age, ethnic background, life stage and other factors affect both the individual and social perception of necessity. There is also a tendency to consider competencies possessed by most people in a sample group as not necessary for functioning in this society.

Measuring Competency

Procedures for assessing competency in life roles currently include paper and pencil objective tests and various types of performance indicators. Of the paper and pencil tests, the APL Survey and Content Area Measures are the most widely known and used in adult education. These assessments are comprised of multiple choice items rather than the open ended questions on the original APL project version.

To determine if performance on the original APL instruments was related to success in life, the Texas researchers calculated correlations between item

performance and three success indicators: Income, Occupational Status, and Educational Level. Items which tended to correlate positively were selected for the interview schedules used in the national assessment of competency. The relationships between APL performance and the success indicators were used to develop conditional probabilities and to establish the three APL competency levels. However, no correlations were published in the final report.

Using the original Texas data and instrument, Cervero later computed the correlations between the success indicators chosen by the project and APL performance. The correlations ranged from .28 for respondent's income to .56 for years of schooling. All correlations were significant at the .001 level. Cervero stated that, if one assumes that the survey has content validity and the indicators accurately measure success, it can be argued that the APL assesses functional competence.[9]

Griffiths and Cervero, among others, have questioned the use of the APL indicators. Family income and chief wage earner's income, they assert, may not be accurate indications of success; for example, is a family with two wage earners more successful than one with only one wage earner? They also point out that the APL research was intended to provide an alternative scale to years of schooling as an indication of educational attainment.[10]

Griffiths and Cervero further questioned whether the test assesses five separate skills or five separate knowledge areas. Cervero pursued this question by completing a factor analysis of the Texas APL Survey. His findings suggest that reading, computation and writing account for a substantial proportion of the variance in APL test scores, with reading accounting for the greatest proportion. Items did not cluster according to the content areas they were intended to measure.[11] In a factor analysis of the ACT/APL Survey

all items correlated in the same direction, with correlations ranging from -.26 to -.70. When a two factor solution was computed the items did not group according to the skills or content areas they were designed to measure. Epps and Cervero argued that the one underlying assessed dimension is reading and that the second factor is not identifiable.[12]

There is further evidence that reading ability is substantially related to APL performance. Informal observations of program personnel indicate that ABE students with poor reading skills have difficulty with the APL tests. Cervero found a correlation of .81 (.89 corrected for attenuation) between the ACT/APL Survey and the new GED tests.[13] He attributes this high correlation to the emphasis on reading in both measures. It could be further noted that both include recognition of correct writing and math skills, and that the new GED contains some life applications. In a second study Cervero found a correlation of .49 between the ACT/APL and the old GED. Since the group on which the data were collected was more homogeneous than in the previously mentioned study, Cervero computed what the correlation for the two tests would be if the variance of scores were larger. The resultant correlation of .80 was almost identical to the previously cited correlation.[14]

Flaherty found a .41 correlation between the ACT/APL Survey and the reading comprehension subtest of the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE), Level M, and a .36 correlation for only the APL reading items and the TABE.[15] In this study students read only the APL sections necessary for completing the reading items. This factor and the fact that only the general comprehension subtest of TABE was used may have accounted for the lower correlations. Flaherty further suggested that these low correlations may have been due to differences in the applications of reading skills on the two tests. However,

the possibility may have been that when non-essential reading is eliminated as a task in taking a functional competency test, the correlation with general reading is lower, and different abilities may be measured.

While high reliability coefficients are reported for total ACT/APL Survey and content area measures, the methods for computing reliability "are estimates of internal consistency; that is, they are indications of the extent to which the items on a test or subtest measure the same domain."[16] The publishers state that the moderate inter-correlations among content sub-areas and among the skills indicate that each content area or skill contributes something unique to the total domain of functional competency. Their caution regarding the interpretation of reliability coefficients may, however, be more to the point. It is suggested that "total Survey scores are very reliable global* indicators of functional competence.[17]

A more conservative perspective is that the instruments are appropriate measures of ability to gather information that may be related to functioning competently.

Competency means that a person can do something. In life there is rarely one right choice suitable for every person in every situation. Moreover, there is usually more than one way to realize a desired situation. Though basic skills are used to acquire or impart information to assist in making a decision or reaching a goal, there are often alternative avenues for getting or giving that information. For example, a person may complete his/her own income tax return, or gain assistance from a friend or agency. It is doubtful that consideration for these factors can be built into objective tests as they currently exist. While use of an objective instrument is far more

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*Author's emphasis.

practical in programs that cannot reward student efforts with a diploma, this method may better assess selected tasks that could, but may not necessarily, be used to reach an outcome rather than ability to realize that outcome. As such, the tests can serve a valuable function in adult education, so long as we are clear about what is measured.

Because of limitations of the multiple choice format, Slater and Nafzinger[18] have suggested using applied performance tests to judge ability to deal with practical life problems. Such procedures are intended to approximate reality so that integration of the required sub-skills can be assessed. One potential procedure is the development of simulations.

Programs which base judgment of competencies on a variety of performance indicators exist in adult education. For example in the New York State External High School Diploma Program, proficiency in 64 generalized competencies is assessed through five major task assignments, such as selecting an appropriate apartment. The generalized competencies are skills which are considered necessary to further learning, employment, and daily life functioning and could be applied to a number of different goals. The five task assignments require the application and integration of the skills to adult related activities. Further requirements must be met in either occupational/vocational, academic, or specialized skills before the diploma is awarded. Demonstration of competence may involve documentation of prior activities, performance on relevant tests, evaluation of performance or a product judged by experts.[19] Procedures used in the New York State program have been adopted by other programs. In some cases performance is equated to credits.

As yet there is no published set of performance indicators that can readily be used in programs across the country. Individual programs tend to

develop their own procedures, which again may assess alternatives and the integration of skills to a varying extent. Standards for satisfying competency requirements also vary. Data regarding the relationship of test scores on an objective test and actual or simulated performance levels are not available.

The Effects of Instruction

A few programs reported data regarding the effects of life skills instruction. Programs in Louisiana, New England, Illinois, Alabama, and New Hampshire report positive and significant gains in student APL Survey performance after taking part in an instructional program.[20] In each of these programs instruction varied considerably. There also appeared to have been varying degrees of emphasis on basic skills. Louisiana and Illinois reports provided data which indicate increases in general reading ability. In Illinois this gain was attributed to systematic instruction of both basic and life skills. In the previous year there had been less emphasis on reading instruction and reading test score gains were substantially lower for the APL group.

Only the Louisiana study reported comparison data with students not receiving APL instruction. Gains on both basic skills and the APL instruments were significantly higher for those students receiving APL instruction. Further analysis of the score changes indicated that, considering the amount of instructional time, the APL group's per hour basic skills increase was significantly greater while the per hour gains for APL were not. The significant reading gains may have been due to an emphasis on those skills in instruction.[21] This finding suggested that teaching basic skills interrelated with life applications of those skills may have improved general reading ability more than did general reading instruction approaches.

The results of the data were not conclusive. Gains reported came from programs attempting systematic life related instruction for the first time; score increases may have been due to the Hawthorne effect. On the other hand, the instruction was implemented under less than optimal conditions. Teachers were uncomfortable with some of the APL topics and had insufficient resources. There was also insufficient information regarding the correspondence between what was taught and what was assessed by the APL Survey. Then too, APL Score gains may have largely reflected increased basic skills ability.

Qualitative data from programs, however, provided support for the perception that life related instruction had implications for students beyond the classroom. Invariably, students reported that they felt more capable and confident in handling various life situations. Acquisition of a diploma, which assisted in upgrading or acquiring employment or entering educational and training programs, was frequently noted as a benefit to people in diploma programs. It was not clear whether it was simply attaining the degree or learning skills that made the difference. Anecdotal information, rarely available or systematically collected, provided the most telling evidence of the positive effect of this type of curriculum. Informal conversations with teachers and students indicated that students frequently received help in dealing with their specific problems or acquiring knowledge which helped them make a decision. This may have been a referral to an appropriate agency or assistance in writing a letter. In other instances students used the information provided to change a behavior, e.g., opening a bank account.

It further appeared that more people who take part in life skills instruction tended to stay in the program than did those in general basic skills tracks. Figures from Louisiana, New York, Texas and Iowa supported this

observation.[22] Additional side effects of implementing life skills instruction were reported from several programs. Invariably, instruction spread to other program efforts. Teachers became more sensitive to the non-basic skill needs of students, and the range of assistance provided to students was broadened. It seemed clear that these efforts affected staff perceptions regarding the nature of basic education programs. Whether the programs were truly competency based or not, students appeared to be receptive and to benefit from current efforts.

Conclusions

Competency statements, measurement of competency and ascertaining the effects of instruction are intricately related. Thus far, research efforts to identify necessary competencies provide useful information which has assisted programs in implementing functional instruction. To better identify the desired outcomes of that instruction, however, further exploration of the best procedures for determining necessary competencies is needed. Using these procedures, competencies most commonly needed as well as those needed by adults in specific communities, with specific life situations, can be determined. From such lists programs can then identify individual needs. Here, too, more valid and reliable ways to assist clients in becoming aware of those competencies needed immediately and those they may need in the near future must be developed.

It would also be useful to analyze competency statements to determine the generic processes inherent in those statements. Often, the same processes are applied in many competencies, e.g., identifying and using relevant agencies. Using this list and relating the list to the alternative applications of the processes, a valuable tool for recording student progress could be developed.

An important program outcome would be evidence that participants can apply skills to new activities.

Procedures for assessing competency are still in an early developmental stage. The most commonly used test appears to measure life related applications of basic skills--skills which are useful in attaining desired situations and in functioning competently. Because paper and pencil methods are more feasible than actual performance tasks for programs which cannot offer certification or have limited amounts of participant time, further development of objective assessment procedures should be pursued.

To assist in developing paper/pencil and performance instruments, information regarding the efforts of individual programs should be exchanged. An attendant issue is the determination of the competent behaviors and standard of performance required for demonstrating a competency. While such requirements may vary from location to location, they should be linked to levels of functioning actually necessary for living in those areas. The fact that there are alternative routes for gaining and demonstrating a competency should also be recognized in the procedures used.

The further development of competency statements, assessment devices and standards will better enable programs to implement the CBE process and to determine the effects of that education. There is a need to conduct more studies not only to determine the comparative effectiveness for increasing basic skills but to understand the broader effects of CBE functional instruction verses predominantly basic skills instruction. While self-perceptual reports are one source of information, it is necessary to gather more complete objective data regarding noticeable changes in people's behaviors. The process of CBE, if fully implemented, provides for the gathering of performance data as

evidence of program completion. In addition information regarding the effect of learning on situations outside the educational program as well as long term effects are needed.

Competency Based Adult Education is in an early stage of development, with current efforts representing only selected elements of a total process. While there is evidence to suggest that recent efforts have been beneficial for students, existing accomplishments should be reviewed in relationship to that total process.

Before a true estimation of CBE can be made, we must strive to improve the tools and practices of components, and then to implement programs which incorporate those components. The experiences and data amassed thus far provide for making decisions and determining directions for future efforts.

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RESEARCH ISSUES IN COMPETENCY-BASED ADULT EDUCATION

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Educational personnel at all levels of instruction are struggling with the nebulous concept of competency-based education. Within adult education, it is a concept which appears to have a great deal of support at the national level. Although this support has stimulated much activity at the state and local level, there remain a number of important questions relevant to the implementation of competency-based programs. Generally, these questions concern themselves with four major areas:

1) What are the competencies?

2) How do we measure competencies?

3) What are valid means for providing instruction?

4) How do we evaluate CBAE Programs?

In April, 1978, Fischer[1] published a review of Competency-based Adult Education (C.B.A.E.) through the Division of Adult Education, United States Office of Education. In this review, she addressed these questions and summarized the relevant research. The major areas addressed are still relevant today. The purpose of the following paper will be to explore the last three areas and to identify significant research questions that need to be answered.

For purposes of this paper, CBAE will be defined as a process in which an adult is given credit for demonstrating his/her ability to function successfully in adult life roles. These life roles or outcomes and the criterion for meeting them are explicitly stated. Thus, the adult who meets or passes the criterion is judged competent. No time limits are placed on the adult and no prejudgments made about "appropriate" settings for learning or instruction.

Inherent in this definition of CBAE are the problems and issues that many adult educators face in trying to implement competency-based programs. A more in-depth discussion of various issues and their implications for research will be explored throughout the paper.

Measuring Competencies

Theoretically, testing (assessment) within a competency-based program should be very different from that used in traditional educational settings. Often, the term "testing" is dropped and performance assessment is used. Criteria for (passing) this assessment are supposed to be explicit, known to the learner, and criterion referenced.[2] Competencies are indicators of successful performance in life-role activities, and thus, assessment of competence should also approach real-life demonstrations. This form of assessment is seen as more fair and relevant to the adult's needs and has created new enthusiasm. CBAE programs at a national, state, and local level have presented CBAE as if this form of assessment were already developed, validated, and reliable. While some work has been done in the development of instruments, guidelines, and criteria for competency assessment, CBAE assessment is still in its infancy stage.

What has been developed? What are the problems, and where does research still need to be done? To date, a few instruments have been developed. Notably, the American College Testing Program has developed the APL Survey and the Content Area Measures. Following closely upon the original APL research, ACT developed multiple-choice instruments which addressed the knowledge areas and objectives identified in the APL research. These are, perhaps, the most widely used instruments, especially in CBAE programs using the APL objectives. Unfortunately, little is known about the relationship between these measures and the original APL instrument used to assess literacy in the United States. Although ACT

retained the APL objectives, considerations involving mass production and usage caused them to change the format of the test. While the original APL instrument used an interview format including open-ended questions, the ACT version uses strictly a multiple choice reading test format. In the original APL instrument, literacy was assessed with regard to various skills (i.e., reading, listening, speaking, writing, math, etc.) but the ACT version assesses literacy primarily with respect to reading. A study by Cervero[3] comparing GED and APL test scores confirms the importance of reading skills in the ACT versions. Thus, the ACT versions give a very limited, or confounded assessment of many of the skills found relevant to adult competence in the original APL research. Beyond this limitation, ACT has never attempted to assess the relationship between test scores on its versions compared to scores on the original APL instrument. Whereas competency profiles (i.e., APL 1, 2, 3) derived from the original instrument were constructed from data on a representative United States sample of adults, ACT profiles or norms (e.g., below average, average, above average) are based on a sample of adult education students. ACT's "above average" rating and an APL 3 are considered the same or very similar; however, these two categories have not been proven to be analogous.

Because the ACT versions of the APL test will have high visibility and probability of usage throughout CBAE programs, research documenting the relationship between ACT's tests (CAMS and the APL survey) and the original APL research instrument is needed. Concomitantly, research documenting the relationship between paper and pencil performance and real-life performance is also required. If CBAE is to fulfill its promise, it cannot lose sight of its real-life orientation. Paper and pencil instruments are attractive because they are easy and quick to use, seemingly objective, and relatively inexpensive. Probably CBAE programs need some paper and pencil instruments in order to

streamline diagnosis and assessment. But there is a strong need to find out just how valid these tests are. There is also a strong need to identify skills tests which are appropriate for adults and which can be used in conjunction with the APL tests to diagnose weaknesses and certify competence. This suggestion may seem an anathema to those who have been emphasizing the integration of skills and knowledges (e.g., the APL matrix), but unfortunately no paper and pencil instrument or other form of assessment is available which gives good information about both.

Besides the issue of paper and pencil measures, there are some general issues which need to be addressed. These issues involve the development of performance indicators which by their nature can have a wide range of difficulty, and the setting of cutoff scores. These issues reflect upon the basic question, "How much competence is necessary for success?" As CBAE programs develop, they must deal with these issues head on. Take for example trying to determine whether or not a person is competent in the content area of Occupational Knowledge. Several major competencies would have to be assessed, one of which might be filling out a job application form. This seems like a very reasonable form of assessment, truly competency based. But as one begins to decide what constitutes a "passing" performance, problems arise. What criteria should be used to rate performance (e.g., neatness, completeness, appropriateness of response)? Who should select the criteria? How is a minimal level of performance established? Is a minimal level of performance enough? The answers to all these questions are open to research. One can add to these questions other concerns focused on how many competencies the adult must demonstrate to be judged "ready for success." Of course, no easy answers exist, but several programs (e.g., New York's external high school diploma[4] and Texas' competency based high school diploma) have been developed to certify that the adult has sufficient competencies to be awarded a

high school diploma. Establishing criteria, methods of assessment and guidelines for evaluating performance have been accomplished through trial and error, "expert" opinion, and "majority rule" among those involved in the assessment process. Those responsible for assessment are often those same people who are determining standards. Although this strategy has allowed for some consistency and feelings of involvement across pilot sites using a specific competency-based model, it has also created some serious questions. What were the values of those establishing standards? How much variance in standards should be allowed from site to site? Are there other types of strategies for setting of standards?

Assessment within competency-based adult education is just beginning to develop. Those involved in this development usually begin with high ideals concerning real-life performance simulations, and come to realize that compromises need to be made due to economic and time considerations. To address these basic concerns regarding assessment, research should answer the following questions:

1) How valid are paper and pencil instruments when they are used to assess real-life performance?

2) What are reasonable criteria for determining functional competence?

3) What is the relationship between ACT's version of the APL survey and the original APL survey?

4) What is the state of the art among competency-based adult programs in establishing standards of adult functioning, and how do these standards compare across programs?

Having a valid, cost-effective and time-efficient system of assessment is perhaps the most important need among competency-based adult programs. Assessment is the hub of competency-based programs and research that addresses assessment issues should be given top priority.

Providing Valid Instruction

Several important issues arise in the arena of instruction. Since both skills and content are important to competence, curriculum specialists and teachers need to develop instructional strategies to integrate the two components. Anyone dealing with this issue, though, comes to realize a basic dilemma: Should instruction and the structure of curriculum give priority to skills development or to the acquisition of content. This is more than just an "ivory tower" dilemma. As one looks at functioning, competent adults, one realizes that they use several modes (i.e., reading, listening, viewing) to learn about and adapt to their world. Thus, an adult who is a good listener can become competent at many or most things and yet never read. He can listen to tapes, ask questions over the telephone, listen to the radio, and listen to others. In response to such an adult, most teachers would probably perceive his greatest need as "learning to read." This orientation implies that focusing on skill weaknesses is the best strategy. It also indicates that skills instruction is the priority, although the teacher may conscientiously try to build skills in a relevant context. Another possible strategy would be to identify the content (life-coping) that the individual needs. The teacher might then assess the student's learning style or best skill(s) and offer activities which will help the learner gain the content quickly. Obviously, the situation is even more complex than depicted here. Combinations of strategies are also possible. The student might begin by learning survival content through a skill strength. Concentration on skill weaknesses might start at a later time when the learner perceives the need.

The learner's role here, as an active agent, also helps to complicate the issue. The importance of that role leads onto other issues also important to the instructional component. Many adult educators feel that CBAE implies an orientation toward the learner as an active participant in his ongoing education:

he is given options, allowed to express his needs, etc. If, in fact, this involvement is a symptom of CBAE, how can we assess that this involvement is taking place? Research regarding the involvement of the CBAE student could also provide valuable information as to the impact of this involvement on the motivation and learning of the adult.

As with any instructional situation, numerous strategies are available. Those strategies already discussed: skill strength/content development versus skill weakness development have implications for the motivation of the student.

Evaluating Programs

Both process and product evaluations are needed in CBAE. Process evaluations should be conducted to provide feedback for program improvement, while product evaluations are important in demonstrating accountability to funding agencies. Unfortunately, evaluations of a "product" or "summative" nature are often attempted before the program has had sufficient time to develop. Many CBAE programs need time to develop, flounder and find themselves before anyone looks closely at their "products." A thousand details involving curriculum, assessment, diagnosis, prescription, management, documentation, etc., need to be worked out. It is during this time that another form of evaluation, namely formative evaluation, can best be used. By systematically setting up a feedback system concerning what is going on in the program, what needs to be changed and why, how the learner feels about the program, etc., one can provide a clarification of the CBAE model being used.

One should also never lose sight of the fact that CBAE is innovative. The work of Hall and Loucks[5] in assessing the Levels of Use and Stages of Concern of teachers implementing innovative educational programs seems to have direct relevance for CBAE. These authors have demonstrated that innovative

programs are adapted by teachers in stages and that the complete process of adoption often takes years to complete. The stages of adoption should influence the amount of impact that a program has, for example, on students and thus has ramifications for evaluating CBAE programs.

Designing an impact evaluation for CBAE represents a challenge. Because random assignment is virtually impossible, one is forced to look for appropriate comparison groups. This, too, can be a problem. One must ask a very basic question: Does CBAE have a set of objectives that are comparable to those of existing adult education programs? If it does, then appropriate measures can be found or developed and used to compare the groups (for instance, in a pre-post experimental control design). A pre-post experimental control design was used in a study conducted by the Louisiana State Department of Education where APL students and traditional adult education students were compared on the California Achievement Test and the APL Survey.[6] This would seem to indicate that a good overlap in objectives existed for the two programs. If, though, the objectives are not the same or perhaps overlap only slightly, then alternative evaluation designs must be uncovered.

It can be argued that, in fact, CBAE has a very different set of objectives from other adult education programs. Demonstrating competent functioning (CBAE) and demonstrating academic skills (GED) are not the same. Comparing the two programs is analogous to the situation in which a traveler wants to know if he should take the north-south or the east-west highway.[7] We could answer him by comparing the road conditions and the number of rest stops, yet no answer would be very meaningful without finding out where he wants to go.

Unfortunately, evaluation without control groups is tantamount to heresy among evaluation experts. As has already been stated, discovering evaluation

strategies that are appropriate to CBAE is a challenge. Recognizing the stages of adoption of traditional education personnel is also relevant and will aid CBAE programs in self exploration and improvement.

Conclusion

To summarize, there are a number of important research questions which need to be addressed if CBAE is to continue to be a viable educational alternative. Most important are the questions surrounding the assessment process. Researchers should take a close look at paper and pencil instruments and their role in assessing functional competence. They should also attempt to compare those performance criteria and standards now being used to certify competence.

In the area of instruction, researchers can attack questions regarding instructional strategies. A comparison of skill weaknesses development versus skill strength/content development represents one potential line of inquiry. Also, the research regarding the role of the adult student as active participant could provide valuable information regarding the motivation and learning of the adult.

Lastly, evaluators of CBAE programs must look carefully at the appropriateness of traditional evaluation techniques and methods. Research on stages of adoption of CBAE should help evaluators select appropriate evaluation designs.

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V. EPILOGUE

COMPETENCY BASED ADULT EDUCATION: A METAMORPHOSIS IN LITERACY EDUCATION

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Introduction

An ancient Chinese proverb speaks to the value of educating starving individuals in the use of the fishing pole. Two actions are discussed. The first concerns short-term needs only; the second focuses on both short-term and long-term needs. While both actions are valuable, their processes and outcomes are quite different. These differences, as illustrated through the proverb, focus on the inherent dilemmas faced by adult literacy education.

Because of the varied beginnings and programmatic forms of adult education, there have been divergent opinions on 1) the role of adult education in relation to the undereducated adult, 2) the primary knowledge and skills for sufficient and necessary literacy, and 3) the best strategies in the teaching-learning process. With each teacher, each program and each student, there have evolved numerous combinations. However, most adult education activities have focused on short-term goals. Often this limited focus has not been by conscious design. Rather it has been created by extremely diverse clientele, their overwhelming need for immediate intervention, their significant variability in skills and knowledge levels, and their intermittent participation. It has also been perpetuated by programmatic discontinuity, minimal resources, limited staff development and support research.

Many adult educators believe that effective, relevant literacy education should incorporate both short and long term needs. These practitioners, teachers, curriculum developers and administrators are now examining a broader

vision, a vision which incorporates the notion of functional literacy and the process of competency based education. As illustrated in these proceedings, many adult literacy educators and program administrators believe CBAE is an important and valuable audition to adult education.

CBAE: A Crucial Stage of Metamorphosis

Competency based adult education (CBAE) has gained prominence at a time of significant national and international need for effective adult literacy education. In both the public and private sector, literacy skills are discussed as an expectation unmet by current schooling systems. Further, such skills are believed to guarantee individual autonomy from societal welfare systems and to increase one's chances for survival within this highly technological society. CBAE provides one avenue of systematic instruction to respond to these significant needs.

CBAE has gained its major dynamic quality from the cohesion of functional literacy concepts and competency based learning processes. Both elements are not unique from prior educational activities. For many decades, the concept of functional literacy had been interwoven within varied adult education activities. Although not denoted as functional literacy, content material and learning activities had been used for immediate reinforcement and practical application to adults' daily activities. Effective adult education teachers had observed a correlation between relevant content/skills and improved retention of undereducated adults. In recent years, the concept of functional literacy has gained national significance through discussions regarding the nature and scope of illiteracy for educational and census purposes, through the research of the Adult Performance Level Project (APL), and

through other significant projects such as Apperception Interactive Method (AIM) and life-coping skills programs.

From a different perspective, competency based education evolved from innovative theory and research in learning processes and educational delivery systems. Both traditional and vocational-technical systems had experimented with this behavior-oriented, focused outcome system. Although adult education had been concerned with goal achievement learning, e.g., passing the General Educational Development High School Equivalency Test (GED), these activities had not presented the comprehensive, systematic, and validated competencies of current CBAE efforts. This metamorphosis of literacy education--the fusing of functional literacy perspectives and competency oriented processes--represents a new distinctive character to adult literacy education. This character of CBAE represents five unique qualities to the adult literacy movement.

Competency based adult education is a systematic effort to infuse basic skills development with functional literacy concepts of our society. Due to the fragmented, everchanging nature of adult literacy efforts, few programs and instructors could look beyond the basic teaching requirements of reading, speaking, writing, and computation skills. Teachers and programs, attempting to integrate functional literacy concerns into basic skills, did so in a very stylized way and with very specific clientele needs. The CBAE movement has created a new focus for experimentation, research and execution of an all encompassing approach to functional literacy. It has generated significant activity to integrate these concepts into the teaching of basic skills and into a competency-oriented program serving undereducated adults.

The competency based education process is grounded in research which defines a specific set of competencies and therefore outcomes for a learning

experience. This research orientation emanates from the interaction of daily adult life activities and basic communication, problem solving and interpersonal skills. The defined competencies have a sense of credibility for the present and future activities of students. Further they add a new dimension of accountability for learning activities. These competencies define the "markers" of present and future levels of accomplishment. This research based assessment system is one of the greatest strengths of the movement. It offers a rational basis for curriculum development, for tracking the teaching-learning process, for identifying the eventual outcomes to impact upon the learner. It builds the short and long term focus into a sequential instructional process.

Both past and present adult literacy programs have often drawn heavily upon the perspectives and research of learning styles and cognitive development of children. In addition, undereducated adults often have been subjected to "elementary school teaching mannerisms and materials." Individuals in adult literacy education may be ignorant about basic skills and knowledge, but they are keenly aware of the difference that education means to them and their families. They do represent mature individuals who have experienced life and the autonomy of adulthood.

CBAE brings the adult life orientation to the content and process of adult literacy activities. Undereducated adults come to the literacy classroom with pressing needs and desires. They are sharply focused on the value and relevance of information which is responsive and has immediate application to their lives. Often they also come with suspicion and anxiety. Will this program maintain their dignity while giving them skills and information that society labels as "basic information for a child learner"? Will this process reinforce earlier classroom failure; will this new environment be insensitive to the undereducated adult's cultural background and values? CBAE, in its

varied programmatic forms, offers the undereducated adult a process and content focused on adult life activities. The content and skill has been designed for immediate application and connection between the classroom and everyday life. In addition, the CBAE process discriminates the present level of knowledge and ability. Adult students can view themselves along a continuum of learning experiences. They can enter the learning process at their own level of ability. They can see a sequential development in their learning and systematically follow their own progress towards learning goals. This orientation offers a valuable form of continuing positive reinforcement through immediacy of learning activities, through secondary reinforcement by application in their daily lives, and through a developing sense of self awareness and control over the destiny of their learning activities.

Many adult education learning centers and programs have been characterized by their reactive, "emergency ward" orientation. Little time, energy and leadership is allotted for direct instructional program planning and curriculum development. Adaptability, flexibility, immediacy are the key stimulants for creation of learning goals, processes and evaluation. Beyond this fluidity of program instruction, intermittent attendance by adult learners also causes additional discontinuity of the teaching-learning outcome. CBAE offers the opportunity to structure continuity within adult literacy programs, to concentrate varied practitioner efforts and student involvement towards a holistic teaching-learning curriculum. With stated competencies and processes, teachers, administrators and students can jointly participate in defining the program and the teaching strategies. Continuing assessment and evaluation pinpoint specific areas for both student and curriculum development. Further, this curriculum and process provides a common point of reference for publishers of literacy materials and for professional in-service and graduate training

programs regarding the focus and future requirements for adult literacy education programs. CBAE is stimulating a framework for serious research on the value and effectiveness of varied forms of adult literacy education and provides a concept and process that encompasses a total perspective of educating the illiterate adult.

Lastly, CBAE provides an approach which can accommodate the diversity of adult skill/content levels, the voluntary, self-oriented participation rates of learners, and the unique problems of assessment and evaluation of this diverse population. Adult literacy education has never had adequate and sufficient tools to match the learner with the instructional process. CBAE presents one valuable approach to aid instructor and students in customizing the teaching-learning process. The competency based approach and variable access provides for self-pacing, individualization, and skill level development of learning activities. It accommodates the voluntary, intermittent participation of adult students and teachers. It offers a continuous feedback mechanism for both student-teacher concerns and programmatic developments. Ideally, this teaching-learning process should be able to personalize content/skill level assessment and teaching to the unique characteristics of each adult learner.

These five distinctive qualities define the impact of a properly developed and implemented CBAE program. Each quality contributes to its forceful, dynamic relationship--connecting the learner with the needed skill and knowledge. This movement towards CBAE, however, does not represent the solution, the panacea, for educating all undereducated adults. It is one evolving system of instruction which is intimately linked to the cultural/technological state of our culture and to specific clientele needs. CBAE

offers one vital approach to a multi-dimensional eclectic system of adult literacy instruction.

Next Stage of Metamorphosis: Devolution

These proceedings have captured at one point in time, the thoughts, beliefs, knowledge and practices of representative CBAE programs in the United States. As one segment of many activities, these proceedings illustrate the excitement and frustration of commitment to a new process and the diverse impact and implementation of this process upon a variegated system of instruction and program delivery. These programmatic efforts also represent the past--that which has occurred. The future of CBAE is focused on a stage of devolution, of passing on of the key principles and concepts to others and of creating the environment to experiment with areas untouched by both CBAE and non-CBAE literacy activities. In considering the future development of competency based adult education, several key issues should be addressed.

First, one of the most significant and pressing issues facing adult literacy education is the effective involvement and instruction of the hard-core unemployed, the geographically dispersed illiterate rural population, and the illiterate non-English speaking population. Current adult literacy efforts have had significant difficulty in developing appropriate strategies and relevant instructional approaches for these specific groups. CBAE programs have created a process and a model implemented predominantly within urban and suburban locations, serving participants who are typically English-speaking and semi-literate. The next step for CBAE programs, and probably a most difficult one, is to redefine initial instructional goals, entry level learner needs and value orientations as they relate to fundamental development of

language as a desired tool for expression and of self-concept of the illiterate as a "learner." The hard-core unemployed and the other hard to reach illiterate populations require a unique programmatic design focused on their needs and orientations.

Secondly, since CBAE is based on a functional literacy approach, its continued relevance and value is intimately connected to the quality and conceptualization of research which defines and assesses functional literacy competencies. As noted by Fischer and Nyer, research on defining competencies and on assessment of competencies will continue to be a key focus for debate and for the creation of alternative models. Further, this functional literacy approach is heavily dependent upon the impact of generated societal change in redefining appropriate/relevant cultural behavior and necessary technological adaptations to life style and work skills. CBAE faces a continuing challenge to up-date and modify curricula and materials for future life role requirements. For example, most present CBAE curricula do not introduce the usage of pocket calculators or a basic understanding of computer systems in daily life interactions. Both of these examples illustrate the potential problems of technological innovation impacting upon individual knowledge and skill. If we desire continued relevance of CBAE programs, there must be the creation of an ongoing research component to identify new knowledge and skills and to develop definitions and assessment tools for these newly designated competencies.

Third, in analyzing the specific learning objectives and competencies of the APL curriculum and several other CBAE models, there is an obvious bias directed toward the young and middle-aged adult orientations. CBAE programs presume that present functional literacy skills have no age discriminating parameters. However, these curricula typically discuss skills relevant to the

young and middle-aged, e.g., preparing for a first job interview, raising a family and considering family planning alternatives. Current research eloquently points out significant differences in life tasks and therefore varied functional demands upon differing age groupings. Unquestionably, there are significant needs for providing adult literacy education to those individuals who represent the high school drop out and the middle-aged undereducated of our society. However, present CBAE curricula covertly neglect the unique and specific functional literacy needs of the older adult. It should be noted that illiteracy rates are the highest in the group of 55 years of age and older; lowest socio-economic incomes are most predominant in this same group. From 1974 national statistics, only 6% of the participating adult literacy students were older adults. Future efforts in CBAE should focus one of its developmental thrusts towards creating a CBAE process oriented to the functional literacy concerns of the older adult.

Fourth, as was noted earlier in these proceedings, there are few adequate research and assessment devices applicable to adult learners. Development of varied cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills assessment instruments should be a top priority. The development of this instrumentation should also be reflective of the current nature of the CBAE process and be in concert with adult learner characteristics and variable levels of ability. In addition, the value of CBAE can only be measured with adequate short-term and long-term evaluation instrumentation which has sensitivity to the process as it relates to the undereducated. New CBAE evaluation formats and data-collection procedures need to be designed and implemented. Until there is adequate assessment and evaluation tools, no program can reasonably present its effectiveness in relation to another system.

Fifth, research on adult development and learning has been extremely limited. Ironically, we have a minimal amount of definitive knowledge about the characteristics of the undereducated--the primary focus for CBAE efforts. There is a significant, fundamental need for research data on the motivational orientations, values, self-concept development and learning styles of the illiterate, undereducated adult. Further, there is a need to define the short- and long-term benefit of specific curriculum orientations for the undereducated adult. There are varied factions within adult education who question the merit of functional literacy approach as opposed to a subject literacy or liberal arts orientation. They question the basis for defining functional literacy; they perceive functional literacy as middle-class societal expectations. These groups would prefer curricula oriented to grappling with the key cultural, philosophical, and subject-oriented traditions. This concern is not a new issue to adult literacy education circles; however, there is no definite basis to support or refute either concern. Both factions have strong perspectives and little empirical research support regarding the comparative significance of their particular approach and its effectiveness in the lives of the undereducated. Both raise the key issue of the nature and substance of learning outcomes for adult literacy programs.

And finally, as CBAE blends into the broad stream of literacy activities, this movement must develop interrelationships with other similar community and literacy education activities. The strength of adult literacy activities and the future of CBAE rests on its ability to collaborate and interrelate with community colleges, CETA programs, community action and social service agencies. Its future vitality rests on the care and thoughtfulness of this collaboration. CBAE programs may be extremely protective of

their identity and territory; this isolationistic stance could create its own obsolescence. CBAE cannot continue to be a viable approach without interacting and sharing its process and content with other agencies which also impact with undereducated adults.

As stated by the Chinese proverb, "Give the hungry man a fish and tomorrow he will return for more. Teach the hungry man to fish and he will feed himself forever more." CBAE provides a process and approach to develop literate, self-reliant adults. As a new movement in adult literacy education, it offers a set of values and perspectives for continued reflection, dialogue, and experimentation.

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